

110,000 foreign workers in Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — The central bureau of statistics on Monday published the first time figures on foreign workers in Israel, indicating they number fewer than previously believed. Foreign workers as of November 1995 totalled close to 110,000, including 61,000 with legal work permits and 47,000 illegal workers. More recent figures for illegal workers were not available but the number of legal workers, as of Aug. 1, 1996, had increased by 26,000 to 87,000. Unofficial estimates had put the number of foreign workers at 250,000. The government has begun considering ways to cut a growing dependence on foreign workers, who do low paying manual labour, particularly in construction and agriculture. They have gradually been replacing Palestinians barred from the Jewish state for security reasons.

Jordan Times

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جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية للراي

Palestinians: Israel stealing water

MARSEILLE, France (R) — Palestinians attending a conference on water resources said on Monday that Israel was stealing water from Arab lands and they planned to raise the issue at the gathering of Mediterranean nations. "We will certainly bring up what is the veritable theft of our water by the Israelis," Palestinian delegation head Professor Riyad Al Khoudary said. "They are pumping our water from areas alongside the border with the result that about 30 per cent of the water used in Israel comes from Arab sources — mostly from Palestinian areas but also from Syria and Lebanon," he said. Ministers and experts from Mediterranean countries on Monday began two days of discussion on water resources, an acute problem for the region of 426 million people.

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JD1,916m draft budget unveiled

Finance minister outlines austerity budget and says no plan to cut subsidies and extra attention is given to 'social safety net' Deficit of JD225m without foreign aid well within restructuring programme; no new tax is planned; focus given to infrastructure to attract investments

By P.Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Finance Minister Marwan Awad on Monday unveiled a JD 1,916 million draft budget for 1997 envisaging a 3.9 per cent deficit when expected foreign assistance is excluded.

The draft budget, which was approved by the Cabinet on Saturday before being sent to Parliament for approval before the end of the year, reflects an 11.1 per cent increase over the budget for fiscal 1996, Mr. Awad told reporters.

The figures released by the finance minister differed drastically from those given in a draft obtained by the press early Saturday and published in Sunday's newspapers.

Given the differences, it was clear that the earlier draft underwent dramatic changes within the Council of Ministers before it was approved to be sent to Parliament.

"It is an austerity budget in line with our economic restructuring programme and we aim to achieve the goal of 2.5 per cent budget deficit by the year 1998," said Mr. Awad.

"We have managed to bring down the deficit from 24 per cent of the gross domestic product (in 1989) to 3.9 per cent in 1997 as a result of our prudent economic restructuring programme," he said.

In specific budget terms, the deficit is JD 56 million, but the actual deficit — when expected foreign assistance of JD 169 million is excluded from the budget — is JD 225 million, or 3.9 per cent of the GDP. The corresponding figure for fiscal 1996 was JD 237 million, or 4.6 per cent of the GDP, Mr. Awad said.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is supervising the implementation of the restructuring programme and foreign government credits and rescheduling of debts owed by Jordan are conditional on IMF certification that the programme is on course.

The finance minister said debt servicing — local as well as foreign — was estimated at JD 510 million — JD 258 million in principal and JD 252 million in interest. But the figures were not included in the budget, and Mr. Awad said he would be revealing detailed figures and arrangements in his speech to Parliament while presenting the draft budget to the legislature.

Mr. Awad also said Jordan's economy grew by 5.2 per cent in 1996 as opposed to expectations of six per cent and that the Kingdom expected a 6.5 per cent growth in 1997.

The 1997 draft budget envisages total revenues of JD 1,860 million, with local revenues of JD 1,691



Marwan Awad

and foreign assistance of JD 169 million.

Total expenditures are estimated at JD 1,916 million, with current expenditures of JD 1,481 million — reflect an increase of 8.2 per cent over 1996 — and capital expenditure of JD 435 million a boost of 22.1 per cent.

Allocation for government subsidies for bread and other staples as well as for local wheat production is estimated at JD 72 million.

Officials had cited figures of more than JD 160 million in actual subsidies in 1996 when the government rechannelled subsidies to wheat to direct cash compensation of JD 1.28 per month per head to every Jordanian in August.

The shift was described as aimed at avoiding misuse of subsidised wheat and cut

expenditure on subsidies. Mr. Awad affirmed Monday that the government planned no cuts in the direct cash compensation. Also, no new tax or fees or increase in existing levies is planned for 1997.

The finance minister attributed the increase in expected local revenues in 1997 to sound administrative and financial management and an effective revenue collection system.

He also announced that the government was not planning any wage increase for the civil service and noted that the budget allocates funds for a "social safety net" that involves improved medical and social services and national health insurance for all.

The "safety net," he said, should improve the living standards of civil servants much more effectively than an across-the-board wage increase.

The minister said allocations in the budget are expected to create 3,000 jobs.

The highlights of the budget are:

— Total revenues: JD 1,860 million (six per cent over 1996)

— Local revenues: JD 1,691 million (8.2 per cent over 1996)

— Foreign assistance JD 169 million (JD 191 million in 1996)

— Total expenditures: JD 1,916 million (11.1 per cent

over 1996)

— Current expenditure: JD 1,481 million (8.2 per cent over 1996)

— Capital expenditure: JD 435 million (22.1 per cent over 1996)

— Deficit (in budget terms): JD 56 million

— Actual deficit (excluding foreign aid): JD 225 million (JD 237 million in 1996)

— Allocation for food subsidies: JD 72 million

— Allocation for social development: JD 28.5 million (49.2 per cent over 1996)

— Allocation for "social safety net": JD 7 million

— Spending on infrastructure (maintenance as well as on new ones): JD 110.9 million (27.6 per cent over 1996)

— Spending on tourism and antiquities: JD 11.8 million (168 per cent over 1996)

— Education and training: JD 46.5 million (23.3 per cent over 1996)

— Health services: 45.7 million (65 per cent over 1996)

The salient points of the draft budget, Mr. Awad emphasised, were:

— No new tax or fee is planned. Existing levels of taxes and fees will not be raised either.

— The direct cash compensation in lieu of subsidies will be maintained regardless of fluctuations in

(Continued on page 7)



Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and his Spanish counterpart Jose Maria Aznar hold a joint press conference in Madrid on Monday (Reuters photo)

Jordan, Spain urge collective effort to revive peace process

Kabariti holds talks with Spanish leaders and delivers King's message to King Juan Carlos Madrid discussions focus on EU role in Mideast, Jordanian-Spanish ties and association agreement

AMMAN (J.T) — Jordan and Spain on Monday called for collective efforts to reinvigorate the Middle East peace process after talks between the prime ministers of the two countries.

The Jordanian prime minister, Abdul Karim Kabariti, who began a visit to Spain on Sunday, and his Spanish counterpart Jose Maria Aznar held talks in Madrid on bilateral relations, the latest developments in the peace process on all tracks and other issues of common concern as well as Jordanian debts to Spain, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported from the Spanish capital.

Following the meeting, the two prime ministers held a press conference during which they called for collective efforts by the two countries using their credibility and their good relations on the international level to reinvigorate the peace process further.

Mr. Kabariti's visit comes few days ahead of a visit here of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and was seen by observers as an effort to

reaffirm the Arab stand in the peace process and Jordan's support for European endeavours to balance the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations.

Mr. Kabariti's three-day visit was also aimed at strengthening Jordanian-Spanish relations and boost the Kingdom's negotiations with the European Union on an association agreement.

Mr. Kabariti was also received by King Juan Carlos later Monday. The prime minister delivered a message from His Majesty King Hussein to the Spanish monarch.

The prime minister also met with Arab diplomats accredited to Spain and reviewed the Middle East peace process. Mr. Kabariti briefed the ambassadors on the latest developments in the peace negotiations and Jordan's efforts to save the peace process.

In his concluding remarks at the press conference, Mr. Kabariti, who is also foreign minister, stressed Jordan's support to the mission of the European Union's special envoy to the Middle East peace process, Ambassador

Miguel Angel Moratinos.

Mr. Aznar said Spain supported Jordan in the Kingdom's negotiations with the EU on an association agreement that would provide it with preferential status in economic cooperation with the European bloc.

The two prime ministers said they discussed several regional issues, including Iran and Iraq.

"We met together and I am sure that we had very good talks," said Mr. Kabariti. "Our two countries enjoy a very excellent relationship. I reiterated to the prime minister how much significance that we attach to the Spanish role when it comes to peacemaking and when it comes to fostering stability and prosperity in the area."

The prime ministers said he told Mr. Aznar that "whenever the issue of peace or the issue of economic prosperity comes up then Madrid and Barcelona are always mentioned as the starting point and as the initiating process."

That was a reference to the international conference

(Continued on page 7)

Hawi wants civil marriage legalised in Lebanon

BEIRUT (AFP) — President Elias Hawi wants civil marriage legalised in Lebanon so that couples of different religions do not have to go abroad to tie the knot. "We must revise the civil law so as to introduce civil marriage because it is abhorrent for those who want to enter a state of matrimony to have to travel to Cyprus or elsewhere," Mr. Hawi said late Sunday in a televised debate. "It is inconceivable for it not to be possible to have a civil marriage in this country when a civil marriage conducted abroad is legally recognised in Lebanon," he said. Most Christian-Muslim couples cross the sea to Cyprus to get married, and their marriage is recognised on their return. Religious ceremonies in Lebanon are recorded straight away in the civil register.

Egypt denies mistreating Sudanese

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt has denied Sudanese allegations of mistreating Sudanese students saying such reports were "lies aimed at undermining Egypt's reputation, the government daily Al Ahram said on Monday. "The regime in Sudan has published lies aimed at undermining Egypt's reputation," a security official was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

Iraq agrees to implement oil deal, expects flow to begin in December

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — Iraq has agreed to implement the oil-for-food deal, specifying the Iraqi government's "full agreement with details for the plan's implementation."

"We have concluded our talks over the last couple of months with a full agreement with the (U.N.) secretariat on the ways and terms of implementation," he said.

Mr. Hamdoun noted that before the oil-for-food deal could be implemented, the U.N. Sanctions Committee must approve an oil pricing mechanism which he said "hopefully" could take place this week.

Saying that "December is the most likely time" when Iraq could resume limited oil exports under the deal, Mr. Hamdoun noted that the Iraqi oil pipeline should be ready for pumping by Dec. 5.

"We have agreed on all the aspects including the numbers and everything suggested by the secretariat," Mr. Hamdoun said, but added that in his letter he did "not go into details" concerning figures.

The United Nations has said it intends 14 inspectors to check the oil exports, 30 monitors to be stationed at food arrival points, and 150 observers to check the equitable distribution of food and medicine, in addition to local employees who will serve as drivers and translators.

Although the oil-for-food deal only comes into force

including details on the number of U.N. observers and their working conditions.

Last September, Mr. Ghali put the deal on hold after Iraq sent troops into Kurdish protected areas of northern Iraq to intervene in fighting between rival Kurdish factions.

Mr. Hamdoun did not discuss details of the agreement but they presumably included such issues as the number of U.N. observers allowed in the country and their "freedom of movement."

Mr. Hamdoun said he thought oil could begin flowing in December, pending completion of repairs on an oil pipeline through Turkey and approval by the Sanctions Committee of the pricing formula.

"All the aspects of the process, including the number of observers, including the way of movement and all the aspects of the (deal) have been discussed and they have been agreed upon," he said.

Following the incursion into the north, U.S. President Bill Clinton also said the oil-for-food plan was on hold. Asked whether the situation in the north could still delay the oil sales, Mr. Hamdoun replied: "We don't see any reason for the process to stop or to be blocked by this."

"We don't see any reason that any situation right now should impede the implementation or stop the starting up," he added.

Mr. Hamdoun said he had delivered a letter to Mr.

Gharekhan, who is overseeing negotiations for implementation of the oil-for-food deal, specifying the Iraqi government's "full agreement with details for the plan's implementation."

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the day after Mr. Ghali informs the Security Council that all preparations for implementation are complete, Mr. Hamdoun stressed that the main step to be taken remained the fixing of the oil price.

"If the pricing formula is approved, then nothing else remains," he said. "We don't see any reasons that should prevent the implementation."

U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright hailed as "good news" the Iraqi decision.

Speaking to reporters, Albright said that the Iraqi decision was "especially good news for the people of Iraq, and it's good news for the United States."

She said that Washington was "prepared to be able to act positively" by approving the oil-pricing formula when the mechanism was put to the Sanctions Committee by U.N. overseers.

A sanctions committee meeting was scheduled for later in the day, according to U.N. spokeswoman Sylvana Foa.

In Baghdad, the value of the Iraqi dinar soared by 20 per cent in two hours on the streets of Baghdad following Mr. Hamdoun's announcement.

Moneychangers said the U.S. dollar was trading at 1,380 dinars on Monday evening, compared with 1,680 two hours earlier, Mr. Hamdoun made the announcement.

Flashfloods hit south, sweep away vehicles and block roads

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Flash floods caused by heavy rains hit the southern regions of Wadi Musa, Petra and Taybeh on Monday, blocking roads and disrupting power supply in some areas.

The floods swept away at least six vehicles and construction equipment like concrete mixers, wooden planks and scaffolds and other materials, an official statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra said.

At least one person was missing in Wadi Musa, which was the worst hit by the storm, Petra said. Civil Defence teams were engaged in searching for him but by evening there was no sign of the missing man, it said.

The agency said that His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, along with Minister of Interior Awad Khleifat, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities

Saleh Irshaidat and other officials rushed to the area to supervise operations for the reopening of roads.

Eyewitnesses contacted by the Jordan Times on Monday evening reported that a two-hour abrupt heavy rainfall which started at 3:00 p.m. caused the floods, which disrupted electric power in a number of areas but there were no reports of casualties.

Prince Abdullah and the ministers supervised the rescue of tourists visiting the ancient city of Petra at the time, who according to the eyewitnesses, numbered between 400 and 500.

Reports said that the tourists were quickly moved along a safe road to hotels in Taybet Zaman and Agaba. No tourist was injured or affected in any way by the storm, according to the witnesses in Wadi Musa.

Jordan Television said four local residents were slightly injured. Details

were not immediately available.

Petra said that work was under way on the reopening of closed roads and the restoration of electricity to the region.

Prince Abdullah and the ministers toured residential areas in Wadi Musa to inspect the damages and enquire about the condition of the local residents.

The Department of Meteorology told the Jordan Times that unstable weather conditions will prevail in Jordan on Wednesday, causing thunder, showers which will affect the central and the northern regions of the country after hitting the south.

A department official warned of floods in low-lying areas, especially in the eastern and southern desert regions, and forecast temperatures rising to 18 degrees Celsius Wednesday and dropping to 10 degrees at night in the Amman region.

Military and bedouins vote early in Algerian constitution plebiscite

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Algeria's military and security forces as well as bedouins in remote areas on Monday joined the ranks of early voters in a controversial referendum that would boost presidential powers, three days ahead of the general vote.

The early vote will free the military to protect voters against possible guerrillas when the national vote is held on Thursday. Guerrillas, who want to disrupt election day, have warned people to stay in their homes.

Caravans of cars carrying election officials left late on Sunday to travel through thousands of kilometres to reach bedouin in remote areas.

"They start Sunday because they have a long trip of 1,800 kilometres to go to meet voters," said Embark Essadi, an election official in the southwestern town of Tindouf as his men headed off in a seven-car caravan that made up the polling station.

The country's 140,000-strong army were voting at polling stations set up at their barracks, as they had been for presidential elections a year ago.

State television broadcast lengthy footage of soldiers lining up to vote, as well as officers including the army chief-of-staff, General Mohammed Lamari.

Algerian expatriates in Europe and other Arab countries began voting on Sunday. Algerian state television showed voters lining up in Paris, Marseille, Lyon, Brussels and Bonn. Voters said they were pained by the killing at home and hoped their vote would help restore peace.

Officials said television images in last year's presidential vote of expatriates flooding polling stations despite snow and heavy rain encouraged voters at home to turn up in defiance of guerrilla death threats.

Government officials and their backers stepped up a campaign for voters to endorse the constitutional changes. The draft, if approved by more than 50 per cent of the 16.4 million electorate who vote, will broaden the president's paramount powers but limits him to two-five year terms.

It bans politicians from campaigning as representatives of Islam or the Arab or Berber communities. Prime Minister Ahmad Ouyahia said on Sunday during a campaign rally in Bouzerah in Algiers the draft constitution aims to strengthen a multi-party democracy in a united nation.

Assailed by complaints of corruption and bureaucracy, Mr. Ouyahia ordered an official probe of local authorities

in Bouzerah.

Secular opposition firebrand Said Saadi, casting doubt on the election, told the Algerian Liberté newspaper on Monday that national authorities had urged Algiers' local officials to "ban the slightest (independent) presence in the offices where the ballots will be counted."

Although the government insists the poll will be held in "full freedom and tranquility," violence continued unabated in the days before the poll.

The military-backed secular regime had mounted a nationwide campaign for a "yes" vote to the plan, which would set up a second chamber of parliament with two-thirds of its members elected indirectly and one-third designated by the head of state.

Opposition parties have denounced the second chamber as a means of controlling the elected assembly.

The new basic law would also ban religious parties while preserving Islam as the state religion and Arabic as the official language.

As the referendum nears, Islamic extremists, who rose up in January 1992 after the cancellation of elections of the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win, have stepped up attacks on villages and slit the throats of residents who they say have failed to carry out their religious duties.

Secular groups have called for a "no" vote or a boycott, while in Brussels on Monday, the FIS and several other opposition groups issued a joint statement calling for a "no" vote.

"This new constitution that institutionalises the dictatorship cannot restore peace, security and stability in the country," the Brussels statement said.

Bomb kills one

A bomb explosion killed one man and wounded 13 others in a small town near Algiers, the official APS news agency said on Monday.

APS said six people were "badly wounded" by the bomb, which was placed near a bus stop close to the hospital in Berrouaghia. It did not say who was responsible.

The Armed Islamic Group, which wants to disrupt the referendum, warned people this week not to vote.

Algerian newspapers dubbed this the "month of all horrors."

More than 120 people have been killed in the past six weeks, according to independent sources in Algiers.

A car bomb killed five people and wounded 19 on Sunday in the central garrison town of Blida, newspapers said on Monday.

Relative calm at Netzarim

PALESTINIAN boys sit and watch as Israeli soldiers man an armoured personnel carrier stationed at Netzarim intersection on Monday. On Sunday, hundreds of Palestinian motorists blocked a road which is closed to them near the Jewish settlement of Netzarim and Israeli troops warned they would open fire if the Palestinians pressed towards the settlement on the road.



Islamists save Ciller from corruption trial

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkey's Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller on Monday narrowly escaped trial on corruption charges by the supreme court when her Islamist coalition partners voted against laying charges.

A parliamentary committee, which had been set up to investigate alleged irregularities within the state-run electricity company Tedaş while Mrs. Ciller was prime minister, turned down a proposal for her trial, the committee's chairman said.

Metin Bostancıoğlu said eight deputies from Mrs. Ciller's conservative True Path Party and the pro-Islamic Welfare Party of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan had voted in her favour while seven opposition deputies had supported her trial.

Had the committee approved the proposal, parliament as a whole would have voted on whether or not to go ahead with a trial by the supreme court.

Under Turkey's constitution, any senior official convicted by the constitutional court is barred from active politics.

The Tedaş allegation is the least serious of three corruption charges against Mrs. Ciller, a pro-Western secularist now in coalition with Mr. Erbakan.

Political analysts say Mrs. Ciller would be freer to oppose Mr. Erbakan from within the government, or even break the coalition if all the charges were dropped.

She relies on Mr. Erbakan's backing to avoid trial at the supreme court on suspicion of graft, the analysts say.

Two other commissions will rule in the coming weeks on investigations into Mrs. Ciller's substantial wealth and allegation-



Tansu Ciller

that she interfered in the sale of state-owned car manufacturer Tofas to help business allies.

The proposal for Mrs. Ciller's trial came from the Islamists in May when her True Path Party was ruling in another coalition government with the conservative Motherland Party of then Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz.

Several Motherland deputies voted along with Mr. Erbakan's Welfare to open a parliamentary probe against Mrs. Ciller in a move that prompted her to break her partnership with Mr. Yilmaz and eventually form another coalition with the Islamists.

Mrs. Ciller's move to ally with Mr. Erbakan caused an uproar in Turkey's secular circles at the time. Mr. Yilmaz charged that Mrs. Ciller's aim in bringing him into power was to get rid of the corruption charges hanging over her.

During an election campaign before last year's nationwide legislative vote, Mrs. Ciller, Turkey's first woman prime minister who ruled between June 1993 and March this year, had pledged not to cooperate with the Islamists.

Personality clash not behind U.S. veto of Ghali, ambassador says

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The stand-off in the United Nations Security Council over a new term for incumbent U.N. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali is not the result of a clash of personalities between the Egyptian diplomat and the U.S. representative to the world body, the American ambassador to Jordan said Monday.

Ambassador Wesley Egan, answering a question after delivering a lecture at the Amman Petra Rotary Club on Monday, said he was "marginally" involved in discussions in 1991 on Mr. Ghali's bid to become secretary-general of the U.N.

"We all know that Mr. Ghali was not the first choice at that time," said the ambassador, adding that the U.S. did oppose electing the former Egyptian minister but subsequently made a "compromise" under which Washington supported a "one-term" arrangement.

The ambassador, who emphasised that he meant "no disrespect" for the Egyptian diplomat, said Washington continued to have reservations over Mr. Ghali's management of reforms within the United Nations. The U.S. provides 25 per cent of the U.N. budget, but Washington now owes the world body around \$1.5 billion in arrears.

"I can assure you that (the U.S. opposition to Mr. Ghali's reelection) is not a personality clash between Madeline Albright and Mr. Ghali," said Mr. Egan. On Sunday, White House National Security Advisor Anthony Lake said the United States needed Mr. Ghali replaced as a means to convince Congress to pay the arrears to the United Nations.

The Egyptian ambassador to the U.S. was meanwhile quoted as saying that Washington may drop its opposition to the reelection of Mr. Ghali.

"A change in the American position is difficult but it is not impossible," Ambassador Ahmad Maher, who is on a visit to Cairo, was quoted as saying by the Agence France Presse.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Renovation of the Kaaba completed

JEDDAH (AP) — Renovation work has been completed on Islam's holiest shrine, the Kaaba in the city of Mecca that the one billion Muslims worldwide must turn towards during their five daily prayers. The roof and three supporting wooden columns of the Kaaba have been completely rebuilt with sandalwood after decaying, the Saudi Gazette reported Monday. The inside stairs leading to the roof and the bottom three metres of the wall were rebuilt with marble. The Kaaba is now visible again after having been cordoned off from view for the six months of renovations, the first in 40 years. Pilgrims arriving at the shrine circle it seven times, a ritual that continued during renovation. The Kaaba is a black cube-like stone structure with a massive door that contains 270 kilograms of gold. It is in the middle of the vast central square of the compound that also houses the Grand Mosque. Tradition says the Kaaba was built by the Prophet Abraham. It is revered in Islam as the house of God. The renovation was carried out by the Saudi Ben Laden group, which in the past five years has restored other pilgrimage sites in Mecca, the birthplace of the Prophet Mohammed.

No handshake with Israel until peace — Hrawi

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanese President Elias Hrawi has said that he will refuse to shake hands with an Israeli official until a peace treaty is signed with the Jewish state. "I will shake hands with an Israeli official the day that a peace treaty is signed, not before, and Lebanon will be the last country to sign a peace treaty with Israel," Mr. Hrawi told reporters at the presidential palace here late Sunday. The Lebanese president also reiterated his backing for armed resistance against the Israeli occupation of a self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon. He pledged however that the Lebanese army "will prevent any firing towards Israel following a pullback of its army inside internationally recognised borders." Mr. Hrawi also expressed support for Lebanon and Syria holding simultaneous peace negotiations with Israel. The Lebanese president said that right-wing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who took power in June, was hampering the peace process. "If he continues to adopt this approach, peace will not be near," he warned.

Brothers visit accused spy in prison

CAIRO (AP) — An Israeli Druze held in jail here on charges of spying received visits on Monday from two of his brothers, his Egyptian lawyer and the Israeli consul in Egypt, security sources said. The 15-minute visit at the Tora prison was held under "heavy security," one source said. The suspect, Azam Azam, is being held in an isolated cell and treated well by the Egyptian authorities, the sources said. Azam, who is employed in Cairo by the Israeli textile firm Tifon, was arrested and jailed earlier this month on charges of spying for the Israeli intelligence service Mossad. An Egyptian has also been detained in the case, but Israel has denied the charges against Azam. One week ago, the Egyptian authorities extended Azam's detention by 45 days.

Unknown assailant punches Yilmaz

ANKARA (AP) — An assailant punched former Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz in the face at a hotel lobby in the Hungarian capital and then fled, Mr. Yilmaz said here early Monday. The motive for the Sunday afternoon attack in Budapest was not immediately clear. Mr. Yilmaz said the unidentified man bloodied his nose. Osman Basak, a Turkish businessman travelling with Mr. Yilmaz, told private TEGE television that the attacker shouted at Mr. Yilmaz "you betrayed Cati. Our next meeting will be with a gun." Alleged police-crime ties came to light earlier this month when a fugitive, Abdullah Cati, linked to the Turkish mafia and a police chief were killed in the same car that crashed. A deputy from Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller's party was injured in the crash. The Turkish ambassador in Budapest was ordered to push for an inquiry and arrests. Omer Akbel, the foreign ministry spokesman, told a news conference here. But Budapest police said Mr. Yilmaz told them an investigation was "not necessary" and said he would "deal with" the matter in Turkey.

Chartered flight held up by bomb scare

CAIRO (AP) — An Egyptian jet ferrying passengers from Brussels, Belgium, was held up for more than two hours on Monday at the southern city of Luxor because of a bomb scare, police said. Airport officials held up the Airbus 300 jet after an anonymous telephone caller said there was a bomb on board, an Egyptian official said in Cairo. A search of the jet by explosives experts and sniffer dogs found no bomb, he said. He spoke on condition his name not be used. Luxor, known for its pharaonic temples, is 520 kilometres south of Cairo. Police said the jet was carrying 91 passengers when it landed in Luxor. Some got off, and 31 continued onwards to Cairo along with 17 additional passengers. The jet, however, was turned back because of fog in Cairo and made a second landing in Luxor. It returned to Cairo after the fog lifted, the Egyptian official said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:05Budgie The Little Helicopter

14:25Oscar's Orchestra

14:40Comedy — I Love Lucy

15:00Sciences Cartoon

15:15Magazine — Muntagne

16:00At The Zoo

16:30Dog House

17:00News Flash

17:01Fun With Physics

17:15Road To Avoles

18:00 Serie — La Lumiere des Jusies

19:00Le Journal

19:15 Magazine — Extra Large

19:30News Headlines

19:35Murphy Brown

20:00Magazine — Zero One

20:30Encounter

21:10Star Trek — The Next Generation

22:00News in English

22:25China Beach

23:15Mission Impossible

23:59Are You Being Served?

PRAYER TIMES

04:37Fajr

06:08(Sunrise) Duha

11:22Dhuhr

14:13Asr

16:37Maghreb

17:58Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Sweifeh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Armenian International Church Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Under the effect of unstable

weather conditions affecting the Kingdom, skies will be cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance for scattered showers, and winds southeasterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas choppy.

Amman10/18

Aqaba20/29

Deserts09/20

Jordan Valley20/29

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 18, Aqaba 29 Humidity readings: Amman 75 per cent, Aqaba 40 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Fakher Bilbeisi663412

Dr. Mazin Al Nihali830435

Dr. Favez Dabbas759155

Dr. Adnan Zaghloul98140

Ferdows pharmacy778336

Al Asena pharmacy637055

Al Salam pharmacy636730

Yacoub pharmacy644945

Shmeisani pharmacy637660

Nairoukh pharmacy623672

Najib pharmacy847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'anneh250080

Al Quds pharmacy(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Zahur Al Qadi906606

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111

Civil Defence Dept.661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 621111.

637777

Fire Brigade617101

Blood Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Department630321

Hotel Complaints605800

Price Complaints661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints897467

Amman Municipality Complaints787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone623101

Reparis623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs661101

Jordan Television773111

Radio Jordan774111

Water Authority680100

Jordan Electricity Authority815615

Electric Power Company636381

RJ Flight Information (8-

53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity642816

Akleh Maternity642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity642362

Malhas, J. Amman636140

Palestine, Shmeisani607071

Shmeisani Hospital669131

Al-Muasher Hospital667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir775111/26

Army, Marka891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital674155

The Arab Centre

THANKSGIVING IS HERE
AND THE
AMMAN
Marriott
HOTEL
IS GOING TURKEY. JOIN US!

November 28th is a special day for giving thanks and celebrating a traditional American feast complete with succulent roasted turkey, stuffing and all the trimmings. Join us for Al Marriott's famous buffet lunch where you can go turkey crazy or perhaps for dinner where you will receive a complimentary glass of wine. And whether you join us for Thanksgiving or not, take a turkey away from our Pastry Shop and we'll treat you to pumpkin pie for five.

Our take-away turkey is so good,
your friends and family will think you cooked it yourself!

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607607

Rwanda bans Zaire force from using its territory

KIGALI (AFP) — The Rwandan government Monday repeated its refusal to grant permission for a multinational intervention force to use its territory in an operation to help refugees in eastern Zaire.

"We still oppose the force. We think it is irrelevant now that a big number of refugees are back in Rwanda," said Foreign Minister Anastase Gasana.

Asked whether Rwanda would allow such a force to use its territory as a staging post if a decision was taken to go ahead, he said "no."

Mr. Gasana was speaking to reporters after a meeting in Kigali at the weekend to assess the need for such a force, whose potential role was called into question last week as more than half a million Hutu refugees returned from Zaire to Rwanda.

The Tutsi-led Kigali government said virtually all the refugees had returned home, obviating the need for foreign intervention in eastern Zaire, where mainly

Tutsi rebels have launched an uprising.

Aid agencies say, however, that hundreds of thousands of refugees from Rwanda and neighbouring Burundi, which is gripped by a Tutsi-Hutu conflict, are still in eastern Zaire.

The more than 25 nations attending the Stuttgart meeting agreed on a series of "options" for an intervention force, but left the final decision to their individual governments.

Canada's Lieutenant-General Maurice Baril, due to head the proposed force, said after three days of intense talks that "the scene now shifts" to the capitals concerned "to choose in response to the situation in the region if they decide that a multinational force is necessary."

Gen. Baril said the options agreed were all aimed "to support the humanitarian agencies whose task it is to bring aid and relief to those people in need."

He said the military support envisaged would range

from low levels of assistance to increased levels of protection and security for humanitarian operations.

However, aid workers expressed frustration at the meeting's failure to reach a final decision.

"We are very disappointed with the delay," said Arjan Hehenkamp, head of mission for Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF, Doctors Without Borders) in the Rwandan capital Kigali.

"We understand the situation is difficult and changing but we feel the international community should take its responsibility for averting a humanitarian disaster."

He said MSF did not want "to get into the numbers game" — a reference to the controversy over just how many refugees remain in Zaire.

A U.S. military assessment team says it has found only some 200,000 refugees in eastern Zaire, while the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says there are between 500,000

and 600,000.

"We don't care about the numbers. Even if there are only 20,000 we need to reach them because logic dictates that they will be in very bad condition," said Mr. Hehenkamp.

He said access to the refugees was the biggest problem facing the aid agencies and an intervention force was needed because "we don't see any other way."

Help for all refugees, both those who remain in Zaire and those already back in Rwanda, was also the subject of a one-day meeting in Geneva Saturday.

At the talks, the main refugee and aid agencies agreed what they termed a "framework on the resettlement of the refugees," from the crisis in the entire troubled region.

Rwanda has requested that donors provide \$740 million to fund resettlement operations for the thousands of refugees who have already returned.



A Rwandan Hutu refugee boy wipes the smoke out of his eyes while watching the food for his family after they arrived from the Katala Camp Sunday. They have been walking for 22 days after fleeing the fighting in eastern Zaire. Hutu refugees are still arriving at the border between Zaire and Rwanda to return home after two million of them fled the 1994 genocide of 800,000 of their Tutsi countrymen (Reuters photo)

Lukashenko wins referendum on more powers with big margin

MINSK (AFP) — Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko won approval by a large margin in a controversial referendum on increasing his powers, the electoral commission chairman Ludmila Yermoshina said Monday.

Initial results showed that 70.5 per cent of all registered voters cast a "Yes" in Sunday's poll, clearing the 50-per cent hurdle for a constitutional change to become valid.

Mr. Lukashenko, accused by opponents of seeking to establish one-man rule, told reporters that "all the declarations on a so-called dictatorship have no basis."

The Belarus president was seeking to increase his constitutional powers over parliament and lengthen his term in office. The referendum has been fiercely protested by opponents in parliament, who accuse Mr. Lukashenko of already holding authoritarian powers.

A rival question put by Mr. Lukashenko's opposition on scrapping the presidency got support from just 7.9 per cent of registered voters.

A total of 7.3 million people are registered to vote in the ex-Soviet republic.

Turnout was 84.2 per cent, a total of 6.2 million people. The "Yes" vote got 5.2 million votes.

The constitutional changes proposed by the referendum

automatically give Mr. Lukashenko, who was elected in 1994, a fresh five-year term, meaning he would remain in office until November 2001.

The changes also swap the current single-chamber parliament for a two-house legislature in which the president and the upper house of parliament would have the right of veto over decisions of the lower house.

The president would also have the right to dissolve the lower house of the parliament if it passed a no-confidence motion in the government or twice refused to approve the president's candidate for prime minister.

The upper house is likely to be heavily weighted in favour of Mr. Lukashenko's allies.

Prior to the vote, Mr. Lukashenko signed a decree making the referendum binding. This is hotly disputed by his opponents in parliament, who have asked the constitutional court to launch impeachment proceedings.

The court is to decide Tuesday whether there are grounds to begin the process. The parliament will also meet Tuesday.

The referendum was widely criticised by foreign organisations, citing irregularities such as Mr. Lukashenko's total control of the media.

The organisation for security and cooperation in Europe refused to send observers, calling the poll "illegitimate."

Mr. Lukashenko called on "foreign states and international organisations to accept the result and respect the will of the people."

Mr. Lukashenko stands for close integration with Russia and enjoys broad support in the rural areas, where there is nostalgia for the Soviet-style command economy. His opposition comes mostly from the urban intelligentsia.

After intervention by Russian President Boris Yeltsin and mediation by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, the president's battle with parliament appeared to have been defused.

Under a compromise deal, Mr. Lukashenko had agreed to make the referendum non-binding and the opposition in parliament dropped its impeachment bid.

In a slap in the face for Moscow, the deal fell apart when parliament, in which the opposition members face a strong set of Mr. Lukashenko allies, refused to ratify its side of the bargain.

Mr. Lukashenko then also reneged and said Sunday's referendum would be "obligatory for every institution in power." Following that, the parliamentary opposition renewed its demand for impeachment proceedings.

Incumbent reelected in Karabakh poll

STEPANAKERT (AFP) — The leader of Azerbaijan's secessionist Nagorno-Karabakh enclave was reelected over the weekend by a landslide margin, the electoral commission said Monday.

Incumbent Robert Kocharyan, 42, won 86.11 per cent of the votes, defeating his two rivals, Boris Aruchanyan, 48, a parliamentary deputy, who took seven per cent, and Hrant Melkonian, 45, the former Communist Party secretary for the main city Stepanakert, who took just under four per cent.

The commission said 76 per cent of Nagorno-Karabakh's 90,000 voters had participated in the election.

its first by universal suffrage.

With no opposition in the Armenian-controlled breakaway region, the results face no challenge.

Mr. Kocharyan, who was elected president by parliament in 1994, was the chief architect of the Armenian separatists' victory against Azerbaijani forces in a bloody six-year war for control of the enclave.

Nagorno-Karabakh is situated inside Muslim Azerbaijan but populated mostly by Christian Armenians.

In 1988 it launched a bid for secession, and between 1992 and 1993, under Mr. Kocharyan's leadership, Armenian separatists tipped the balance of the fighting

by regaining villages under Azeri control and seizing a huge swathe of Azerbaijani territory.

The war was ended with a truce in 1994 which has held for the most part, but peace talks to reach agreement on the enclave's future status have made little progress.

Azerbaijan is willing to concede broad cultural autonomy to the republic, but rejects full independence, and slammed Sunday's poll as an attempt by the enclave to legitimise its claims to secession.

The election was also criticised by Moscow and Washington as a threat to the fragile peace process.

King Sihanouk returns to Cambodia amid mounting political tension

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — King Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodia's most potent symbol of national reconciliation, returned home Monday to mounting tension in his country's coalition government after two-and-a-half weeks of medical check-ups in China.

The 74-year-old monarch eschewed the traditional welcoming ceremony at Phnom Penh's Pochentong International Airport, ordering that red carpets not be placed on the tarmac and barring photographers and television cameramen from covering his return.

In addition, he demanded greetings from government officials and diplomats be conducted informally.

"He said he was happy, healthy and glad to be back," said one government official who greeted the

king.

Conspicuous by their absence from the airport were Cambodia's co-premiers, First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh was still on an unannounced and unexpected holiday in Thailand and second Prime Minister Hun Sen was in Cambodia but did not turn up.

King Sihanouk, who smiled and waved to the assembled crowd as he stepped out of a government plane, came home amid a dramatic escalation in squabbling between Prince Ranariddh's Royalist FUNCINPEC Party and Hun Sen's former Communist Cambodian People's Party (CPP) over the past week.

Emergency delegations from the interior and defence ministries were sent

to the northwest of the country over the weekend to prevent factional fighting between members of the armed forces.

Fighting appeared imminent Friday when troops in three northwestern provinces were put on high alert following CPP-supported allegations in Phnom Penh that the royalists were trying to cover up links between an unrecognized opposition party and the Khmer Rouge.

Last Tuesday, three days after the accusations were made by alleged Khmer Rouge defectors at the home of Hun Sen, the co-premier's brother-in-law, a senior interior ministry official, was gunned down in broad daylight on one of the capital's main boulevards.

Sri Lanka on red alert as 3 killed in rebel attacks

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka was on red alert Monday, as a Tamil suicide bomber wrecked a police jeep, in an annual spree of violence commemorating rebels killed in the separatist war, officials said.

"The bomber, of course, died on the spot but he couldn't inflict heavy losses on the police," a local official said by telephone shortly after the attack in the north-eastern port town of Trincomalee.

"Only the driver of the vehicle was wounded."

Within hours of the suicide bombing, the Tigers ambushed an army patrol in the neighbouring district of Batticaloa, killing a soldier and two civilian bystanders, local officials said.

Military officials here said police and security units across the country were on maximum alert for possible bomb attacks to coincide with LTTE Supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran's 42nd birthday Tuesday.

"We have taken all possible precautions," a military spokesman here said, adding that road blocks, check points and mobile patrols had been intensified for the week.

The bomber was identified as a member of the elite Black Tiger suicide unit, officials said.

The spectacular, but failed, attack in Trincomalee, 260 kilometres north-east of the capital Colombo, came as the Tigers observed a 'heroes' week' to commemorate thousands of fighters killed in the past 14 years of war.

Tiger attacks to remember their 'martyrs' are not confined to 'heroes' week', which ends Nov. 27 and could take place just before or after the 'official' period of commemoration.

Last year, within 10 days of 'heroes' week', the LTTE killed nearly 80 government soldiers in a series of ambushes in Batticaloa.

Those attacks came as thousands of troops in the north of the country conducted a major offensive against the Tigers to finally wrest control over their former capital of Jaffna in December.

With the dismantling of the LTTE's de facto state in the Jaffna peninsula, authorities fear the rebels could strike elsewhere to exact revenge.

Police have already issued an alert for nearly 30 suicide bombers, the Black Tigers, who are believed to have infiltrated Colombo to target vital institutions or political leaders.

The Tigers say it is a privilege to die in the name of Eelam, the separate state they are fighting for in northern and eastern regions.

Those who eventually join the thousands of Tiger martyrs are chosen by lottery. The names are written down and chosen by leader Prabhakaran so all get an equal opportunity.

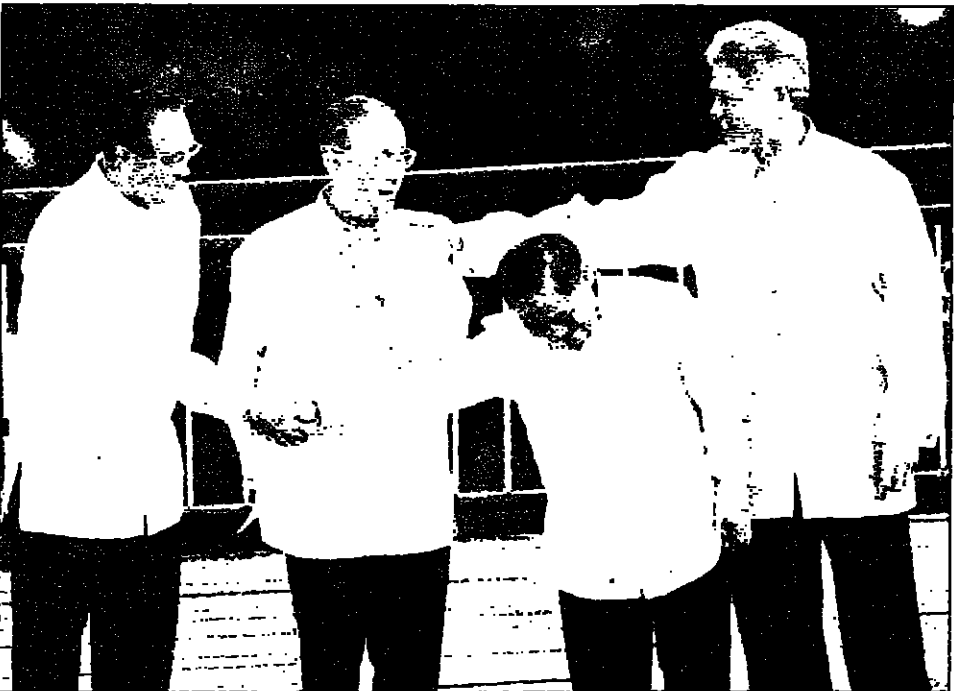
The Tiger suicide cadres are often young boys and girls with secondary school education and those raised in conservative Tamil-Hindu families in a society better known as survivalist rather than suicidal.

Suicide bombers have carried out more than a dozen attacks and have been blamed for the killings of nearly 200 people, including Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa and former Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi.

"Black Tigers" are the self-protective armour of our race," Prabhakaran said in July, to mark the ninth anniversary of the first suicide mission.

"They are the men of flame who can destroy the enemy's armed strength by their brain strength."

The threat of suicide bombings is taken seriously by Sri Lankan authorities. Random searches of pedestrians and regular checks on vehicles in the city have become almost routine.



United States President Bill Clinton (right) reaches out to Taiwan delegation leader Koo Chen-Fu as Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong (left) shakes the hand of Thailand's caretaker Prime Minister Barnharn Silpa-archa during the photo session before the start of the APEC leaders summit Monday. They are all wearing traditional Philippine Barong shirts (Reuters photo)

From Batik to Barong, APEC rings fashion changes

SUBIC BAY, Philippines (R) — In Bogor it was Batik. This year at Subic Bay the Barong is the height of fashion in Asia-Pacific summit circles.

Leaders from the 18-member APEC forum turned up for their annual trade summit here in a traditional Philippine shirt called the Barong Tagalog, upholding an informal APEC custom of donning the host country's national dress.

"I like it," U.S. President Bill Clinton told reporters. "It's cool and airy."

The baggy tunics made of a silk and fibre blend were originally based on the European dress shirt and were a mark of Philippine inferior status during Spanish colonial rule.

But Philippine President Fidel Ramos has turned the one-time symbol of subjugation into a summit fashion statement expressing his country's pride in its growing economic and diplomatic power as host of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum.

The shirts, worn by the leaders for their customary

pre-summit photocall, were embroidered with designs based on Philippine window architecture and the geometric shapes of rice paddies to represent APEC as a window on the Asia-Pacific.

"When you open windows, you see the world and the world sees you, so we're sharing our culture with the rest of the world," said Jean Goulbourn, a Filipina married to a Canadian, who designed the set of shirts with different embroidery for each summit.

At the APEC summit in Bogor, Indonesia, two years ago the leaders opted for colourful Batik shirts.

Last year in Osaka, Japan, they chose casual sports jackets and open-necked shirts, not really national dress but a popular style with Japan's ubiquitous "sakarymen."

At their first summit in Seattle, the leaders were casually dressed against the cold.

Constrained by colonial society, native Filipinos were not allowed to dress like their masters, who nor-

mally tucked their shirts in, according to historians. The semi-opaque style for the Barong was developed as a way of ensuring restive Filipinos were not carrying concealed weapons.

As the leaders were welcomed to the summit centre, some television commentators had trouble making out the leaders from their similarly attired servants.

The leaders wore the see-through Baronges Philippine-style, over white undershirts and with the shirt-tails hanging out.

"The one that was easy to focus on was President Clinton because he's the tallest one, so that needed a little bit of attention so that the embroidery would come out in proportion to his height," said Ms. Goulbourn in a pre-summit interview with Reuters.

On summit day all but one of the leaders wore his Barong over black trousers. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, often portrayed as the maverick in APEC trade discussions, chose grey.

Indonesia sees opposition dwindling in E. Timor

DILI, East Timor (R) — Indonesia's military said Monday that armed opposition to Jakarta's rule in East Timor had dwindled from last year, citing a drop in the number of separatist guerrillas in the territory's rugged hills.

"There are still rebels but there are less than 100 of them, maybe only 80, but we cannot count them exactly," said Major-General Abdul Rivai, chief of the military region of Udayana, which includes East Timor.

In the middle of last year, Gen. Rivai's predecessor put the number at about 200 guerrillas with about 3,000 members of the clandestine movement elsewhere in Indonesia supporting opposition to Jakarta's rule in East Timor.

"In the cities there is the clandestine movement and some community leaders (who do not support integration) but they are a small percentage of (East Timor's) 900,000 people," Gen. Rivai told reporters in the garden of his seaside Dili residence.

Gen. Rivai would not estimate when the armed conflict in East Timor would end. He said he hoped it would be finished "as soon as possible."

Jakarta says five battalions of troops, or about 3,000 men, are stationed in East Timor although diplomats have put the number at between 7,000 to 10,000.

Gen. Rivai said East Timor's Bishop Carlos Belo, the joint winner of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize, had the power to end the conflict.

"If he called for the guerrillas to come down from the hills then it would be finished quickly. Those people in the forest are Catholics too," he said, adding later that he had not approached the influential spiritual leader with the suggestion.

Bishop Belo, who shared the Nobel Prize with self-exiled East Timorese resistance spokesman Jose Ramos Horta for his efforts to bring peace to the territory, is widely known for mediating between the military and the people.

Bishop Belo said Monday he does not support either the integration of East Timor into Indonesia or the move for independence but wants to improve the situation in the troubled territory.

Indonesia invaded the former Portuguese colony of East Timor in 1975 and annexed it a year later in an act not recognised by the United Nations.

Mother Teresa stable but problem persists

CALCUTTA (R) — Mother Teresa's condition was stable Monday after an uneasy night of chest pains and lung congestion, but doctors treating the revered nun said she might have to undergo a surgical procedure.

"Mother Teresa had mild chest pain early this morning," a medical bulletin issued by a panel of doctors treating the 86-year-old Roman Catholic nun said. "Otherwise her condition remains unchanged."

Doctors at the Woodlands Nursing Home in Calcutta, where Mother Teresa is being treated, said her con-

dition stabilised after her third heart failure in four days occurred Sunday.

But Mother Teresa's condition remained precarious. "At the moment her condition is stable. But her condition can turn bad any moment. She is not out of danger," said Dr. S. K. Sen, the hospital's medical director.

Dr. Sen said the doctors were considering the possibility of surgery to relieve Mother Teresa.

"Now we have to do some invasive cardiology," he said.

One possible treatment

might be angioplasty, in which doctors insert a balloon into blood vessels to clear them of obstructions. Dr. Sen said Mother Teresa was reluctant to have any invasive cardiology, he added.

"We have to talk to the nuns of the Missionaries of Charity and then we have to approach her for her consent. Only then can we find out if she needs an angioplasty or not," he said.

Dr. Sen said the missionary woke up at about 10.30 a.m. (0500 GMT) and, when asked if she had slept well, replied, "Yes."

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Local islanders Sunday board the wreckage of the hijacked Ethiopian airliner which lies less than one kilometre from the holiday resort of La Galawa Beach. The hijacked Boeing 767 crashed into the Indian Ocean off the Comoros Islands after running out of the fuel (Reuters photo)

Comoros rescuers comb hijacked plane wreckage

MORONI (AFP) — Rescue workers Monday continued the grim task of combing through the wreckage of the Ethiopian Airlines plane which plunged into the sea off the Comoro Islands in the worst hijacking disaster in aviation history.

At least 120 people died in Saturday's crash, but there were conflicting reports on the precise toll.

So far 78 bodies have been recovered, while a further 42 people are still missing, according to figures issued Monday by the Comoros Foreign Ministry Crisis Unit.

It added that 55 of the 175 passengers and crew survived, but Ethiopian Airlines said there were only 48 survivors.

As Ethiopia declared three days of national mourning Monday, French and South African divers were expected to arrive to search the wreckage situated a few hundred metres from a beach hotel in the north of the Indian Ocean island.

The ill-fated plane narrowly missed the hotel as it

dived into the sea after apparently running out of fuel. The hijackers had demanded that the aircraft, on a flight from Addis Ababa to Nairobi, should fly to Australia via Mauritius.

Police in Moroni said the two Ethiopians arrested on charges of hijacking have yet to be formally identified as the culprits.

They were arrested by Comoros police after surviving the crash, but police said they were seeking a formal identification by the captain and co-pilot, who were the only people who had prolonged contact with the hijackers.

Still suffering from shock, the two crew members have so far been unable to agree on an identification.

The pilot and co-pilot told police the Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 767 was hijacked 15 minutes after taking off from Addis Ababa by two men who forced their way into the cockpit.

A third man remained in the body of the plane where he threatened passengers.

Ethiopian Prime Minister

Taiwan opposition head says U.N. bid futile

TAIPEI (R) — The head of Taiwan's separatist minded main opposition party conceded Monday that China's intimidation made it impossible for Taiwan to enter the United Nations, saying Taipei should not provoke its giant rival.

Hsu Hsin-Liang, chairman of the Democratic Progressive Party and a long-time champion of Taiwan's independence from China, said Taipei's push for a U.N. seat was but a promotional stunt with no chance of success.

"Both Taiwan and China know that it is impossible for Taiwan to join the U.N., that the campaign is merely a symbolic promotion," Hsu said in an interview with Reuters.

Beijing and its supporters in September blocked moves in the U.N. general assembly to consider Taiwan's membership, scuttling Taipei's bid for a fourth straight year.

China considers Taiwan a renegade province not entitled to international recognition since the two separated after a civil war in 1949.

In a clear illustration of China's intimidatory shadow over nationalist-minded Taiwan, even the separatist-minded Hsu warned that the island must not anger China through rash actions that it might see as pro-independence.

"We must pay close attention to the desire of the International Community and we must understand that right now nobody wants Taiwan to provoke China," Hsu said.

"The Taiwan-China problem is an international problem and we have to be careful in our efforts to enhance our international stature in order to draw foreign countries to our side."

Jiang reassures H. Kong of free hand in economic affairs

MANILA (AFP) — Hong Kong Finance Secretary Donald Tsang said Monday Chinese President Jiang Zemin had assured him that the colony would have full control over its own economy after its return to China in 1997.

Jiang "reassured me that we would observe the 'one country two systems' rule and that the management of Hong Kong's economy 'will be an entirely Hong Kong affair,'" Tsang told reporters at a news briefing here.

Hong Kong's representative at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum said he received the reassurance from Jiang during a state dinner given by Philippine President Fidel Ramos Sunday for the 18 economic leaders attending the fourth APEC summit.

Tsang said Jiang had also pledged there would be additional guards placed on the China-Hong Kong border during the transition period "to make sure there would be no influx of Chinese citizens into Hong Kong that would create chaos."

Hong Kong reverts to Chinese rule on July 1, 1997 after 150 years of being a British colony.

It will continue to be a

Indian police release most Miss World protesters

BANGALORE (R) — Indian police said Monday they had released hundreds of protesters detained before Saturday's Miss World beauty pageant which ended here without threatened self-immolations.

Police had held 1,500 demonstrators, including three opposition members of parliament from New Delhi who were released Sunday

as Miss World contestants prepared to leave.

"Most of the protesters have been released on bail. Some of them who were taken into preventive custody have also been let off," said deputy police Commissioner G.K. Bekal of the southern Indian state of Karnataka.

He told Reuters 250 demonstrators, including 25

Opponents to Chechenya pull-out threaten Yeltsin impeachment

MOSCOW (AFP) — The Russian Communist Party threatened Monday to start impeachment proceedings against President Boris Yeltsin over his decision to pull the remaining troops from the rebel republic of Chechenya.

Leftist and nationalist deputies who dominate the lower house of parliament have blasted Mr. Yeltsin's decree signed Saturday as treason and say it will lead to the collapse of Russia.

"Today, the dismemberment of Russia is beginning. Generally, on this basis we could put the question of destitution of the president," said Viktor Ilyukhin, Communist chairman of the state Duma security commission.

The Duma speaker, Communist Deputy Gennady Seleznev, sent a letter to Mr. Yeltsin informing him that the Duma will meet in emergency session Friday to debate government policy in Chechenya.

"What worries Russian parliament members is that the disarmament in Chechenya is unilateral. While our army is leaving, separatist fighters are not turning in their weapons," Mr. Seleznev was quoted as saying by Interfax.

Asked if impeachment proceedings were possible, he said: "If there are offenses against the constitution, what you mention is possible."

Under the constitution, the president is guarantor of the territorial integrity of the state.

Opponents say that Chechenya, which has been fighting for independence, will slide out of control. Communist party leader Gennady Zyuganov branded the troop withdrawal order "anti-constitutional."

The Chechens, and the Kremlin peace negotiators, say that withdrawing all troops, including two brigades previously slated to remain permanently, will make a lasting peace possible.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, who signed an accord on temporary relations with Chechen Premier Aslan Maskhadov Saturday, and Kremlin Security Council Secretary Ivan Rybkin were invited to testify before the Duma.

It is unclear how much support there will be in the Duma for trying to bring down Mr. Yeltsin. The parliament has proved ineffective in influencing Kremlin policy throughout the war since it began in December 1994.

The liberal Yabloko Party has accused the Communists of trying to sabotage peace in Chechenya.

And the deputy speaker, Mikhail Gusev, from the Nationalist Liberal Democratic Party, told ITAR-TASS that nothing in Mr. Yeltsin's decree, or the accord on relations, "talks about Chechenya leaving Russia."

Mr. Rybkin, who coordinates the peace process for Chechenya, hit back at the critics, saying they should "go there and look at the soldiers lying in the dirt and cold and then decide."

Mr. Chernomyrdin met with Mr. Yeltsin Monday to brief him on his meeting with Maskhadov and to "plan future tactics" on Chechenya, a Kremlin statement said, without giving details.

The Kremlin appears to have given up its disastrous 21-month war to crush the

U.S. congressman leaves for North Korea

TOKYO (AFP) — U.S. Representative Bill Richardson left Tokyo for Pyongyang Monday, hoping to secure the release of an American charged with spying by Communist North Korea, the U.S. embassy said.

Mr. Richardson left Yokota U.S. Air Force Base in Tokyo and will return there Tuesday with Evan Carl Hunziker, if the mission is a success, an embassy official said.

Neither the United States nor North Korea has confirmed the release of Mr. Hunziker, a 26-year-old missionary from Washington state, who was arrested in North Korea on Aug. 26.

He was charged with spying for South Korea. The charge carries a possible death penalty.

Mr. Richardson, a Democrat from New Mexico known to have close ties with the White House, has travelled to the isolated Communist state twice before.

U.S. officials and Mr. Hunziker's family have denied that he ever worked as a spy. They say he appears to have crossed into North Korea from eastern China after stripping off his clothes and swimming the Yalu River.

On Nov. 6, the U.S. State Department said Mr. Hunziker had been moved from a hotel to a prison several days after Pyongyang announced it would consider releasing him on humanitarian grounds.

Mr. Richardson's visit came the day after South Korean President Kim Young-Sam promised to pursue efforts for Korean peninsula peace talks despite the incursion of a North Korean submarine into southern territory on Sept. 18.

In a joint statement with U.S. President Bill Clinton on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in the Philippines, Mr. Kim said South Korea remained committed to a 1994 nuclear accord and peace talks with the North despite the submarine incident.

Mr. Richardson, with his early experience as a diplomat, first visited Pyongyang in December 1994 and brought back the remains of an American pilot who crashed in North Korea. He also negotiated the release of a surviving co-pilot.

Last May, Mr. Richardson held talks with North Korean officials on efforts to account for American troops who went missing during the 1950-1953 Korean War.

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Hier to Korean dynastic throne returns to work for unity

SEOUL (AFP) — The last heir to Korea's Yi Dynasty throne, born in Japan where his father lived in exile, returned here Monday saying he would devote rest of his life to unifying the warring South and North.

Lee Ku, 65, the childless son of Lee Un (Prince Yongchun), was escorted by police motorcade from Seoul's Kimpo Airport straight to the tomb of his ancestors where thousands of his clan bowed deep in obeisance.

Dressed in regal robes, complete with the Yi Dynasty jade sceptre and the yellow imperial royal dragons embroidered on his sleeves, Lee Ku attended the first full memorial ceremony to the dynasty in 90 years.

"I want to devote the remainder of my life to unification of South and North Korea," he told reporters at the airport.

"My return has great significance because it will put an end to the unhappy history of the two nations, which has lasted for 90 years since my father was taken hostage in Japan in 1907."

As the last member of the royal family, I will preside over an annual memorial service at the shrine which had been stopped since the (Japanese) occupation," he said.

Aides said the prince, who was born in Japan in 1931 and whose mother was a member of the Japanese royal family, had made several trips back to Korea since independence in 1945.

But he had been unable to

Wearing the royal clothes of his ancestors, Lee Gu (right), the son of the last crown prince of Korea, is escorted by a guide as he tours the family palace of Chongmyo, now a tourist attraction, in Seoul Monday (Reuters photo)

He was sent to the United States to study with the help of then Pacific Commander General George McArthur, graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and married an American before returning to Japan where he went into business.

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Regent pays tribute to Armed Forces

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, said Monday that the Jordanian Armed Forces form a good model to be followed by all sectors.

"We should develop our performance to reach the international standards," he said to Armed Forces officers in a meeting he held during a visit to the Royal Staff and Command College.

The Regent said the Armed Forces provided the Jordanian and other foreign markets with manpower and expertise.

Attending the meeting were Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai and other senior army officers.

Saudi prince thanks Regent

The Regent received a message from Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia expressing his appreciation of the Regent for his message of condolences to Prince Abdullah over the recent air disaster involving a Saudi plane in India.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudi prince files suit against Dar Al Sayyad

BEIRUT (R) — Saudi Prince Waleed Ben Talal has filed a lawsuit against the owners of one of Lebanon's biggest publication houses, accusing them of breaching a sales agreement with his Lebanese mother, his lawyers said on Monday.

The prince's lawyers told Reuters the dispute arose after the Freiha family, owners of Dar Al Sayyad International, refused to sell to Princess Mona Al Solh 50 per cent of the house as stated in a 1993 agreement. Prince Talal, a billionaire businessman, had already paid 50 per cent of the sales price to the Freiha family but it was refunded by the Freihas, the lawyers added. Ilham Freiha, a major shareholder in Dar Al Sayyad International, said the family has filed a counter suit.

Police chief suspended in Minya

MINYA (AFP) — A police chief was suspended from work and several senior officials summoned for investigation after the killing of three policemen by militants, police sources said on Monday. The three died on the spot when militants disguised as police officers raked a police post in the southern Minya province with automatic weapons fire from the back of a van.

British defence secretary to visit UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — British Defence Secretary Michael Portillo is due to visit the United Arab Emirates (UAE) this week for his second time in 1996, the British embassy said here Monday. Mr. Portillo, who made a two-day visit in January, will arrive on Thursday. The UAE and Britain have been locked in negotiations over the past three years for a defence pact which could give Britain greater access to the Emirates' lucrative weapons market.

Netanyahu quashes bid to change anthem

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday quashed attempts to hold an official debate on changing Israel's national anthem "Hatikva" (hope), officials said. A spokesman for the prime minister said Mr. Netanyahu was furious over press reports that he backed efforts to modernise Hatikva, which was written in 1878 by the Jewish poet Nafali Herz Imber and served as a rallying song for the Zionist movement before becoming the national anthem when Israel was created in 1948.

Kabariti, Aznar hold talks

(Continued from page 1)

held in Madrid in 1991 to launch the Middle East peace process and a EU meeting in Barcelona this year when the European bloc announced a major initiative to broaden cooperation and strengthen ties with the non-EU Mediterranean countries. Jordan is considered as a Mediterranean state by the EU.

Mr. Kabariti said Jordan hoped that the process launched in Madrid and Barcelona "will continue and will be translated into mechanisms that will lead us to a conclusive, just comprehensive peace and... to the kind of partnership that Europe and the Mediterranean countries have to really ensure the stability and to ensure the peace and security needed in the area."

Mr. Kabariti thanked Spain for its support for Jordan and the Middle East peace process.

"I would like also to emphasise that Jordan will do whatever it takes to ensure the success of the mission of Mr. Moratinos."

said Mr. Kabariti. "I have listened to the wise assessment of your government regarding peace, the European partnership, regional issues, whether it is Iraq or Iran, regarding the support we will be getting from your country in terms of bilateral relations and promoting Spanish investments in Jordan and increasing the trade between our two countries," he said.

"I hope that this good relationship will continue and it will deepen in a sense that it will become a model to the relationship that any Arab country would like to have with European countries," he added.

Jordan respects Spain very much, he added.

The Spanish premier hosted a lunch in the honour of the prime minister and a delegation accompanying him.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Kabariti met the head of the Spanish agency for international cooperation and discussed with him bilateral cooperation in economic, cultural and financial fields.

1997 draft budget unveiled

(Continued from page 1)

the international prices of wheat.

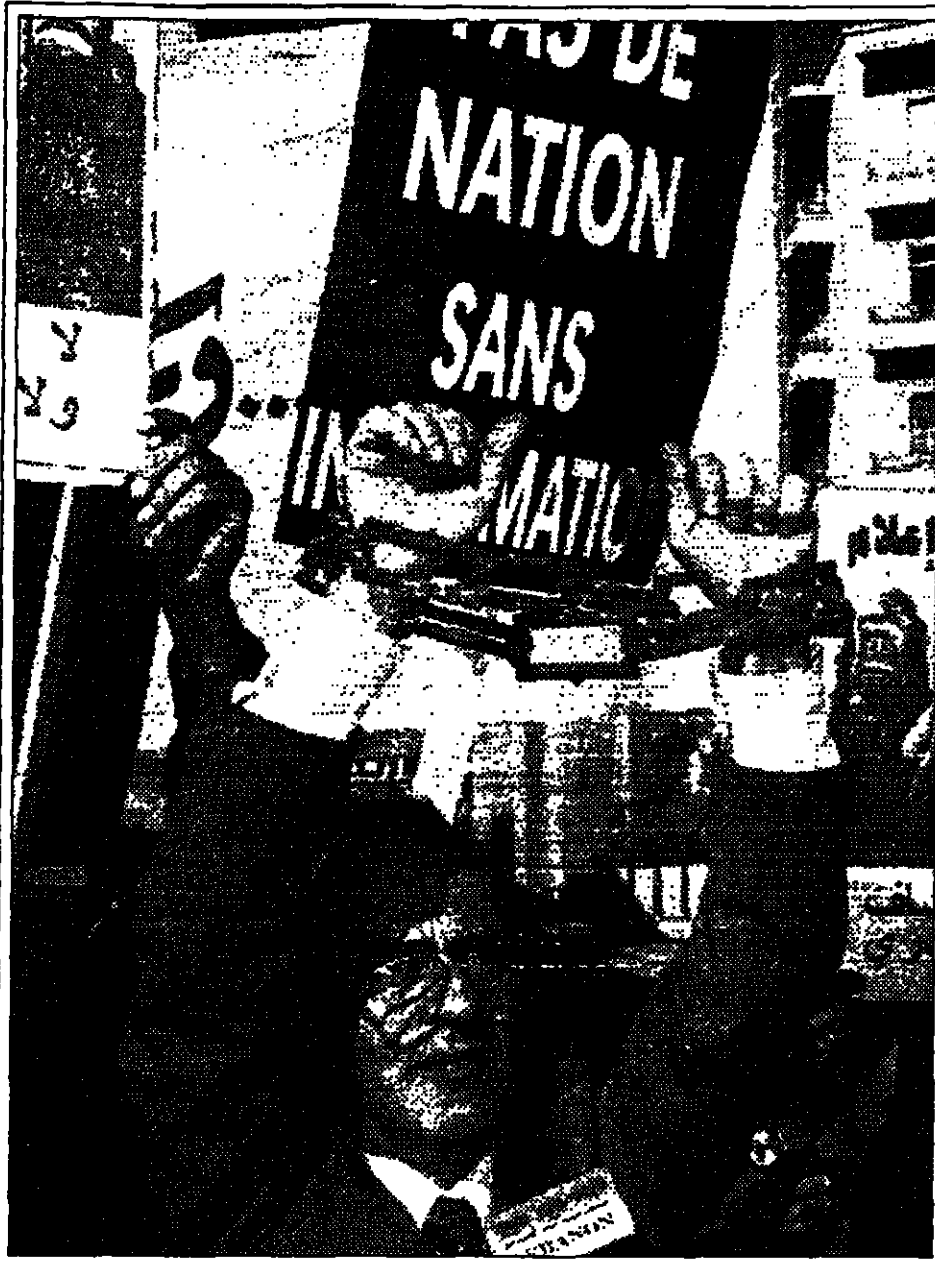
— The estimates fit in well with the economic restructuring programme.

— The increase in capital expenditures means stronger focus on infrastructure with a view to making the investment climate more attractive to capital.

"Finally, the government completed work on the

draft budget in time under Constitutional procedures so that it could be referred to Parliament for debate," said Mr. Awad. The budget should be approved before midnight Dec. 31.

Replying to a question, the minister said the draft budget does not include any revenue expectations from the sale of government equity in commercial establishments in line with the country's privatisation programme.



BEIRUT PROTEST: A demonstrator holds up his hands in chains outside Lebanon's parliament during a protest on Monday against a law that will close most private television and radio stations by Nov. 30. The placard behind him in French says: "No nation without information" (Reuters photo)

Mordechai visits Hebron ahead of resumed talks

Palestinians lodge strong written protest against settlement plans

New dispute erupts over Nablus site

HEBRON (Agencies) — Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai toured the flashpoint city of Hebron on Monday ahead of a resumption of negotiations with the Palestinians over an army withdrawal in the city.

"We are continuing the talks. I hope (Palestinian President Yasser) Arafat will allow them to come to a close and will sign an accord with us," Mr. Mordechai told journalists during the visit.

Meanwhile, the top Palestinian negotiator said Monday the expansion of Israeli settlements will lead Israel and the Palestinians back into confrontation in a strongly worded letter to his Israeli counterpart.

In a letter to Dan Shomron, Saeb Erekat said the decision by the Israeli government to build new homes in West Bank settlements "is not only a violation of the signed agreements, but also buries the hoped-for expectations of peace."

"If this settlement policy continues, it will lead the two peoples — the Palestinians and Israelis — back to confrontation," Mr. Erekat said.

Mr. Erekat said settlement expansion is banned by the existing Israeli-Palestinian agreements, which say neither side should take unilateral steps to change the status quo in the West Bank or Gaza Strip pending negotiations on a final peace settlement.

Earlier Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged Mr. Arafat not to get onto a path of conflict with Israel.

"Both sides must choose between a direction of cooperation and increasing trust, or a deterioration of the situation and reduction of trust," he said at a news conference at which he criticised the Palestinian protest.

Sunday that blocked settlers in the Gaza Strip from leaving their settlement.

Mr. Netanyahu accused Mr. Arafat of instigating the protest.

There had been speculation that Israeli-Palestinians

talks on Israel's eight-month overdue troop withdrawal from Hebron would resume Monday after a four-day hiatus. But Mr. Erekat said Monday evening that no meeting was scheduled.

In Hebron, Mr. Mordechai inspected barricades set up around Jewish settlements and toured Shuhada Street, a main artery running by the Jewish enclaves. The street has been closed to Palestinians since 1994.

Hebron's settlers, who are vehemently opposed to any army redeployment, asked Mr. Mordechai during talks not to meet Palestinian demands to reopen the street, a topic which has been a main sticking point in negotiations.

The Israeli official also met with Palestinians in the nearby Arab market, hearing complaints about Shuhada Street and alleged settler aggression against local residents.

"Everyone can live in Hebron," Mr. Mordechai told the Palestinians during their chat, surrounded by a heavy cordon of the minister's bodyguards.

In Nablus, Palestinian officials rejected Israeli army demands on Monday to put new buildings up at "Joseph's Tomb," a controversial holy site on the outskirts of this West Bank self-rule city.

Nablus Governor Mahmoud Al Aloul told AFP that Israeli officers demanded at a meeting that two mobile buildings and a new entrance be added to the Israeli-controlled site, where six soldiers were killed in clashes with Palestinian police and demonstrators in September.

"We met with the Israelis today and we refused their demands for changes to the agreed situation at the site," Mr. Aloul said.

Under the 1995 Oslo accords, extending self-rule in the West Bank, Nablus was turned over to Palestinian control except for the tomb compound, which Jewish radicals claim is the burial place of the Patriarch Joseph, although secular Israelis and Palestinians

say it is the grave of a Muslim holy man.

Jewish militants have set up a religious school in the compound which is under permanent army guard.

The army has demanded it be allowed to place two new mobile concrete structures in the compound to serve as living quarters for the soldiers, to open a new gate through the wall surrounding the site and to station an army ambulance inside.

The Palestinians responded that they were only prepared to return the site to its "previous situation" — one small two-room caravan for the soldiers — and to put a Palestinian ambulance at the disposition of the compound.

Any other changes would violate the terms of Nablus autonomy as laid out in the Oslo peace accords, they said. Negotiations on the Nablus tomb are continuing, Mr. Aloul said.

Norway to pressure Israel

Norway plans to put pressure on Israel to reach an agreement on Hebron when Norwegian Foreign Minister Bjorn Tore Godal meets his Israeli counterpart David Levy on Tuesday, the foreign ministry said in Oslo.

"There is increasing impatience on the Norwegian side over the fact that the negotiations on Hebron in the West Bank are dragging on," foreign ministry spokesman Ingvald Havnen said Monday.

"The Norwegian observer force in Hebron cannot stay on forever without an agreement," he added.

Some 40 unarmed Norwegian observers are in Hebron to monitor the planned redeployment of the Israeli army. The Norwegians' mandate expired earlier this fall, but has been extended on a month by month basis.

Mr. Levy arrived in Oslo on Monday for an official visit and to attend the two-day meeting of the World Jewish Congress.

Randa Habib's corner

Back in business

WHEN THE idea of reviving this corner, which had appeared in the Jordan Times for many years, came up again, the nostalgia of the good old days made it very tempting. Thus, despite my other journalistic work that takes a lot of my time, I decided to do it.

Randa Habib's Corner saw the light on an April day in 1982 and was put to rest voluntarily at the end of 1989, with the launching of the democratisation process in the country. I thought then that since people were being able to write, talk, express their ideas more freely after 1989, there would be no point in continuing the corner. After all, the idea of starting it in the first place was to say something in a special way that could not be said otherwise.

But we can still have fun together, talk of blunders and bloomers, taken from our daily life. And of course, the bottom line remains the same: any resemblance to persons dead or alive, is intended.

But having said this, we can get

down to the first order of business here.

Talking of business, I want readers to know that I decided to open a school. What? Everybody does, so why not me? It is an excellent business and God knows we all need the money. Have you checked the prices recently? Crazy. And to make sure that the income is attractive, I am going to hire teachers that accept low wages, without scrutinising their credentials too much.

I am looking for a location for my school. So, if you happen to know of an empty building, with no garden, on a very crowded street, preferably facing a gas station, please let me know.

My new school will be great. I will give it a flashy, foreign sounding name, with the fees very high to make it look really serious and professional.

But I will not stop there. I am planning, at a later stage, to open a university. And, why not, a hospital too. But I will talk about that later.

U.N. arms inspector reports 'grave problems' with Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — A senior arms official on Monday reported the United Nations still faced "very grave problems" in its efforts to ensure Iraq is not concealing banned Scud missiles.

Charles Duelfer, deputy chairman of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM), told reporters before leaving Iraq he had "very constructive talks" on U.N. monitoring to ensure Iraq does not again acquire weapons of mass destruction.

But Mr. Duelfer said there were other problems between Iraq and UNSCOM, which is overseeing Iraqi disarmament under the 1991 Gulf war ceasefire, particularly Baghdad's refusal to allow the wreckage of scrapped missile engines out of Iraq for analysis.

"There are some very grave problems in other areas and those remain. I have not talked about the problems we have with missile engines which Iraq still refuses to permit to leave the country," he said.

He said Iraq's refusal violated its obligations under the ceasefire that ended the Gulf war, when a U.S.-led coalition freed Kuwait from Iraqi occupation.

Baghdad has asked UNSCOM to send experts to study the engines inside Iraq, saying the request for their removal was intended to prolong sanctions imposed for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

UNSCOM Chairman Rolf Ekeus, currently on a Gulf tour to raise money for his cash-strapped commission, said in Kuwait on Sunday he feared Iraq was trying to hide operational missile engines by destroying "useless" locally-made ones.

"Iraq produced some home-made Scud type engines that were useless but we are afraid they have been mixed into this (1991-92) destruction and high-quality rocket engines were taken out and hidden," said Mr. Ekeus at the end of a Kuwait visit.

About 60 engines for long-range missiles that Iraq said it destroyed in 1992 are in boxes at UNSCOM headquarters in Baghdad ready for shipment abroad. Another 20 to 25 engines remain buried at two sites near Baghdad, U.N. officials said.

UNSCOM suspects Iraq may be hiding up to 16 missiles with ranges beyond the 150 kilometres Baghdad is allowed to possess or manufacture under the ceasefire terms.

Iraq in the past did not object to the removal by the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), of its stocks of nuclear fuel.

The United Nations will not lift a ban on Iraqi oil exports until UNSCOM says Iraq no longer has any banned weapons of mass destruction and cannot replace them.

Mr. Duelfer arrived in Baghdad on Friday and held talks with Oil Minister General Amir Rasheed, former head of the Military Industrialisation Commission (MIC) and Dhafir Abdul Majeed, current MIC chairman.

In Riyadh, Mr. Ekeus meanwhile asked Saudi officials for funds for UNSCOM.

Mr. Ekeus said after his talks in Riyadh that the Saudis "clearly are understanding and sympathetic," although his request for funds may be a moot point if the U.N. oil-for-food deal

is implemented (see page 1). Under the deal signed in May, Iraq can sell limited quantities of oil to raise money for not only food and medicine but also to defray costs incurred by UNSCOM and other U.N. agencies.

Mr. Ekeus said his talks with the Saudi foreign minister, Prince Saud Al Faisal, were "very constructive and cordial." Saudi Arabia and Kuwait contributed \$3 million each to UNSCOM's \$30-million budget last year.

Kuwait has expressed in principle readiness to support UNSCOM financially, Mr. Ekeus said, after warning that UNSCOM risked running out of funds by the end of the year and have to close its operations.

UNSCOM's budget helps pay for inspections of suspected weapons sites and a high-tech surveillance system aimed at disarming Iraq of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons as well as ballistic missiles.

Saudi officials told AFP they "understood" UNSCOM's situation but also recalled there would be no problem if the oil-for-food deal were implemented and expressed hope it would be carried out early next year.

Mr. Ekeus said he had raised the financial problems while visiting Washington, London and Paris and would discuss them further with Gulf Arab states which are expected to raise the issue at their Dec. 7-9 summit in Qatar.

The U.N. official, who travels to Oman on Tuesday, said he also briefed the Saudis on the status of efforts to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction.

U.S. to evacuate 4,000 Kurds

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. government announced plans Monday to evacuate some 4,000 Kurdish aid workers from northern Iraq and resettle them in the United States, launching the third operation for Iraqi Kurds since September.

The United States does have plans to evacuate a group of employees of American non-governmental organisations, State Department spokesman Glyn Davies said.

"We've decided that on balance these people were at a level of risk that necessitated bringing them out," said Mr. Davies, adding that the operation will begin "in the coming days."

U.S. authorities airlifted about 2,140 Kurds who worked for the U.S. government in September and an additional 700 Kurdish opposition activists were evacuated in October.

But the aid workers would

be the largest group to be taken out of northern Iraq since Iraqi troops made their incursion into the Kurdish-populated area in late August. U.S. officials have maintained that Iraqi agents continue to operate in northern Iraq and have targeted for reprisals those Kurds who have been associated with the U.S. government.

Among those who were first taken out were Kurds who had supported U.S. intelligence activities in northern Iraq that were meant to undermine the regime of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

But the U.S. decision capped weeks of indecision in the administration which had maintained that the Kurdish aid workers did not face an imminent threat.

"This is very encouraging news," said Mike Kiernan, spokesman for interaction, an umbrella group of American aid agencies that led the

charge for the evacuation of the relief workers.

"The administration is acting very responsibly in protecting these Kurds who risked their lives in the protection of others," he said.

Twelve U.S. agencies that provide relief to northern Iraq had intensified a campaign over the past two weeks to persuade the administration to move quickly to mount an evacuation.

Directors of the organisations met with officials from the National Security Council and the Justice Department to convince them that the Kurds were at risk and that they did not pose a threat to U.S. security, Mr. Kiernan said.

They argued that the United States had a moral obligation towards the aid workers who helped establish the Iraqi Kurdish safe haven that was declared by the United States, France and Britain during the 1991 Gulf war.

Arabs to invest \$38 billion in petrochemicals, refining

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states will invest nearly \$38 billion in the next four years to set up new petrochemical and refining projects and expand existing units, according to a Gulf study.

Around \$23.5 billion will be pumped into the petrochemical sector while the rest will cover upgrading existing refineries, the Saudi-based Arab Petroleum Investment Corporation (APIC) said.

The study, published in the Arab Oil and Gas magazine, showed Saudi Arabia and its Gulf neighbours Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will be the main investors, spending around \$19.4 billion on petrochemicals and \$6.2 billion

on refining.

The bulk of investment by Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and exporter, will cover petrochemicals as it is already the biggest refining centre in the Arab World. Its petrochemical investments are expected to exceed \$8.2 billion covering ethylene, ammonia and urea.

The UAE will spend more than \$1 billion to establish a petrochemical industry and it is set to become a major regional refining centre when expansion at its largest refinery is completed by 2000.

According to the state-run Emirates Industrial Bank, refining output capacity in the UAE will climb to around 620,000 barrels per day (bpd), more than dou-

ble current capacity.

The increase means that the UAE will refine around 25 per cent of its projected crude production in 2000.

Expansion in the petrochemical sector was prompted by growing domestic and external demand and is part of attempts by Arab countries to diversify their economies and lessen reliance on volatile oil earnings.

World demand for petrochemicals is set to surge as more markets are expected to emerge following the 1994 creation of the World Trade Organisation.

Arab states sit atop 60 per cent of the world's recoverable oil reserves and 20 per cent of gas reserves. Most of the Arab reserves are based in the Gulf.

APIC, owned by the governments of 10 Arab oil producers, said Saudi Arabia and the UAE could finance their petrochemical and refining investment from their own resources. But the other Arab countries need to borrow around 70 per cent of the costs of their projects, it added.

The report said the new projects and expansion of existing facilities would sharply boost Arab refining and petrochemical production.

It gave no figures but according to the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, current Arab refining capacity is estimated at around six million bpd while petrochemical output exceeds 12 million tonnes per year.

APEC agrees to free computer trade

SUBIC BAY, Philippines (R) — Asia-Pacific leaders thrashed out at their summit Monday details of the world's biggest free trade zone, starting with a call to free global commerce in information technology.

The summit of 18 leaders of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies endorsed an action plan for a single Pacific Rim economy by 2020 embracing half of humanity.

U.S. officials trumpeted as a victory for President Bill Clinton the declaration's backing for an American plan to free the annual \$500 billion global trade in computers, memory chips and telecommunications equipment.

On the lawn of the summit site in Subic Bay, a former U.S. naval base, Philippine President Fidel Ramos read a declaration calling for "substantial, concrete, measurable and sustainable results" to translate APEC's lofty goals into reality.

Earlier, some of the region's most powerful business executives met to forge deals and contacts and act as a "reality check" on the meeting.

Washington was pressing for zero tariffs on information technology by 2000, and appeared to get much

of what it wanted after Mr. Clinton made a personal summit pitch to harden-up earlier support offered by APEC trade ministers.

The declaration called on the World Trade Organisation to "substantially eliminate tariffs by the year 2000" in its first ministerial meeting in Singapore next month. But it "recognised the need for flexibility".

U.S. trade representative spokesman Jay Ziegler said: "Substantially eliminate is tradespeak for zero."

China's President Jiang Zemin, however, indicated that the United States still had a fight on its hands.

"Because of the differences in the levels of economic development in the member economies, it is very difficult for the liberalisation in the field to be pushed forward in accordance with a timetable," China's official Xinhua News Agency quoted him as saying.

However, Mr. Jiang said Beijing would cut import duties to an average 15 per cent by 2000 after reducing them to an average 23 per cent this year. "China will continue to support the 'APEC approach'," he added.

In a cliff-top summit hall overlooking Subic Bay, leaders of economies from

China to Papua New Guinea and Chile to Canada spent six hours working out a Manila action plan (MAPA).

The plan fused a raft of market-opening measures offered by individual APEC members.

Leaders agreed on nitty-gritty details to create a free trade and investment zone with no customs posts, visas or red tape to block the flow of goods, services and business travellers.

APEC calls for developed countries to free all trade by 2010 and developing nations by 2020.

Not all the leaders agreed on how to do it. The United States wants to fling all markets open in a trade free-for-all.

Some of the heads of developing Asian countries, such as Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad, want to move ahead more gingerly and are chafing at the pressure.

As well as freeing trade and investment flows, APEC aims to promote technical cooperation in areas like transport, energy, telecommunications and infrastructure development. It also intends to make life easier for businessmen by streamlining regulations on customs, standards and testing.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get in touch today with good friends who can assist you in gaining introduction to influential people who can be of great help for your success. Later this evening you can meet with a bigwig and discuss your career activities.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Entertain bigwigs today, get your ideas across, and show your gratitude for their suggestions. Make sure you drive carefully while on the highway to avoid any difficulties or accidents which could occur.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Talk over your aims with a wise fellow associate today and understand how to turn adversity into advantage, which can lead to success. Later this evening will be good for consulting with knowledgeable people for advice.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) If you keep an open mind today, you can discuss your finest talents with an expert who can give some practical ideas for the successful completion of a new project. Later tonight you can go out with your mate.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Show that you are devoted and kind today and make your life with your mate more harmonious. Make things special for your loved ones and they will appreciate the gesture very much and will acknowledge your generosity.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) A clever but kind fellow associate can show you how today to get your career activities completed more efficiently. Try to please your loved ones later this evening and make an effort to maintain the harmony which exists.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) It may be a little difficult today to arrange amusements with persons you like, however, persevere and you will make your activities highly successful and prosperous. Later this evening go out on the town with close friends.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Make sure today that you are using your special talents wisely or you could waste a precious gift which should be spread around. Later tonight will be a good time for you to consult with knowledgeable people and gain their advice.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You can operate best at home today where you can contact friends and fellow associates and safeguard your property against unexpected accidents. Later this evening will be good for you to visit with close friends and have some fun.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) If you are to get rid of uneasiness today you had better think and talk fast and be logical in your presentation so that everyone will understand your objective. Later this evening get together with your loved ones.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Study how to add to your present assets today and then use your energies wisely, so that you are not completely burned out. Later this evening stay home with your loved ones and have a pleasant and relaxing time together.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You had better state exactly what you want today from a bigwig if you are to get it. Take no risks later this evening while on the highway and thereby you can avoid any difficulties which could be disastrous.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye.

Peace chill deepens Israel's crisis

TEL AVIV (AP) — After five years of record growth fuelled by peacemaking with the Arabs, Israel's economy is in trouble.

But in a sign of gloomier times, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared this month that the economy was "on the edge of the abyss" and announced new belt-tightening measures.

His harder line has created a decided shift in the atmosphere.

Israel's previous labour government appeared headed toward peace with the Palestinians and Syria, and fostered business and diplomatic ties throughout the Arab World.

That not only opened regional markets but also brought links to countries like Japan and emerging markets that long shunned the Jewish state. The sense that Israel was out of danger spawned a deluge of foreign investment and flooded Israel with Western brand names from Toys-R-Us to Burger King.

Mr. Netanyahu maintains that the wealth of the past years was a bubble that had to burst. The opposition — and many economists and business people — say the undoing of the peace

process is to blame.

In any case, there is no debating the sorry statistics: — Economic growth, which topped 40 per cent in 1990-1995 and was over seven per cent last year, has tumbled to half that level, and per capita growth of close to zero is expected next year.

— Exports will rise this year by only four per cent, a third of the recent average annual increase.

— Summer tourist arrivals were 10 per cent.

— Unemployment, which fell steadily in recent years, is rising.

Textile factories are closing, and even Scitex Corp., flagship of Israel's vaunted hi-tech industry, announced third-quarter losses of \$151 million and plans to fire 400.

"The slowdown is very serious," Patricia Bar-Shavit, chief economist for Bank Hapoalim, told the Associated Press. He said that while there were many reasons for the decline, "the diplomatic situation has a great impact on the economy."

And the diplomatic situation is shaky. Fighting between Israeli and Palestinian forces in September killed 79, and the imple-

mentation of the autonomy accords is stalled. There are murmurs of war with Syria now that Mr. Netanyahu has removed the Golan Heights as bait for a peace treaty.

Some effects on the economy:

— Military spending, which fell from a third of GNP at the height of the Arab-Israeli conflict to less than a tenth, will rise for the first time in years.

— Israel television revealed this week that most of the road works budget has been moved to West Bank — meaning more lost work hours in traffic jams in badly congested central Israel.

— Immigration is falling. The 750,000 ex-Soviet immigrants of recent years were a key factor in the economic boom.

There are fears that foreign investment may be drying up too.

One Israeli stockbroker who returned from a failed effort to interest Americans in Israel said he had "felt like a whiskey salesman in Mecca."

And Jonathan Colber, head of Claridge Israel Inc., one of the largest foreign investment groups, has bowed out of the bidding for the Bank Hapoalim pri-

vatization and says his plans for local investments are mostly on hold.

Mr. Bar-Shavit noted, however, that the investment decline in most areas has been offset by a rise in investments in high-tech industries, where markets are mostly in the West and are therefore less affected by regional troubles. He estimated 1996 foreign investment may nearly equal last year's \$2 billion.

Mr. Netanyahu has argued that his problems are inherited.

In its euphoria, the previous government spent too freely, he said, forcing the central bank to keep interest rates high to fend off inflation. As a result the shekel is overvalued — stifling exports, harming industry and lowering tax revenues.

Mr. Netanyahu said Israel must balance the "national overdraft, which the previous government left for us," by cutting some seven billion shekels (\$2.2 billion) in government spending.

The Peace Now movement said that would not be enough. "Without the peace process, budget cuts will not help Israel's economy," the group said.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLF	FRF
US Dollar	1.4989	0.5983	1.2660	111.20	1.3415	1508.80	1.6808	5.0657	
DE Mark	0.6672	1.0000	0.3987	0.8435	74.20	0.8944	1007.53	1.1207	3.3786
GB Sterling	1.6716	2.5066	1.0000	2.1138	165.99	2.2423	2526.93	2.8095	8.4720
CH Franc	0.7899	1.1825	0.4716	1.0000	87.76	1.0596	1193.54	132.93	3.9686
JP Yen	0.0090	1.3473	0.5373	1.1369	1.0000	1.2054	13.56	181.04	4.5542
CA Dollar	0.7454	1.1173	0.4456	0.9425	1.21	1.0000	1124.69	1.2537	3.7788
IT Lira	0.0007	0.9925	0.3999	0.8838	1399.25	0.8880	1.0000	11.13	3.3553
NL Guilder	0.5980	88.19	0.3555	75.29	66.11	0.7976	897.49	1.0000	3.0134
FR Franc	0.1974	0.2958	0.1180	24.9581	21.92	0.2546	33.16	33.1600	1.0000

Energy			Mid-East Currencies					
Oils	Last	Previous	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
Brent	23.30	23.50	SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4000	0.19596	0.33794	29.67
W. Texas	23.90	24.10	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.40867	0.16289	0.34521	30.31
Bony	23.30	23.50	KW Dinar	3.3501	5.02513	2.00441	4.24448	372.8
Dubai	21.10	21.35	BH Dinar	0.3770	0.57772	0.15868	0.33634	295.1
UL Ga	210.07	219.00	CY Pound	2.1842	3.2775	1.307	2.7655	243.1

Main Equity Indices							
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng.	% Chng.	High	Low	Pc Ch.
New York	DOW JONES	6333.87	-14.16	-0.22	6338.09	6332.75	6348.03
New York	S&P 500	734.88	-2.74	-0.37	738.17	734.82	737.82
London	FT-SE 100	3962.1	3.9	0.1	3966.4	3952.2	3958.2
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	20796.37	-133.36	-0.64	20940.2	20773.3	20929.7
Paris	CAC 40	2229.68	-10.65	-0.48	2235.38	2223.81	2240.33
Frankfurt	DAX	2763.84	-31.96	-1.14	2793.27	2763.84	2795.8

Energy			* JOD Cross Rates		
Commodity	Last	Delivery	Currency	Buy	Sell
Soya (c/lb)	22.23	Spot	FR Franc	0.1389	0.1393
Tea (c/kg)	118	Spot	JP Yen	0.6365	0.6339
Barley (S/bsh)	2.21	Spot	NL Guilder	0.4185	0.4200
Rice (S/ton)	470	Spot	IT Lira	0.4632	0.4620

IT'S ACROSS THE STREET KNOCKING DOORS TELLING YOU I'M WITH HIM.	I'M STANDING OVER HERE SO NO ONE WILL KNOW I'M WITH HIM...	WHAT KIND OF AN EVANGELIST	I'M A SEMI-
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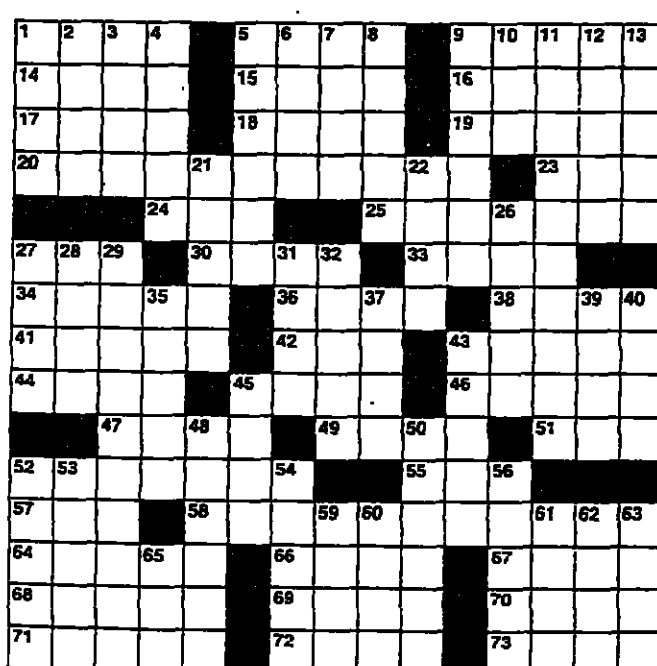
THE Daily Crossword by Raymond Hamel

ACROSS

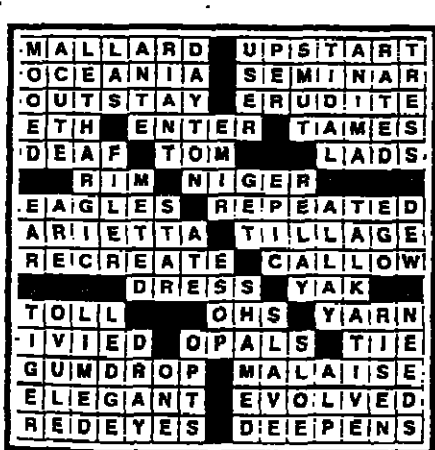
- 1 Seaquils
- 5 Magician's garb
- 9 Innocent ones
- 14 Bit of gossip
- 15 Melody
- 16 Leap with joy
- 17 German courtesy title
- 18 Goes bad
- 19 "Silence of the Lambs" director
- 20 Fair attraction
- 22 Vigor
- 23 To's opposite
- 25 Dresser compartments
- 27 Install a lawn
- 30 Warhol
- 31 Actor Sharif
- 34 Computer command
- 36 Brinker
- 38 Wound protection
- 41 "Vanner" (Holmes work)
- 42 Be in debt
- 43 Warmed-over
- 44 Left
- 45 Cobbler's tools
- 46 Spang of words
- 47 Moran or Gray
- 49 WWII town
- 51 Toper
- 52 NJ town
- 55 Three
- 57 Lubricant
- 58 Carnival treat
- 64 Poet Sylvia
- 66 Own
- 67 Plus
- 68 Famed skater of old
- 69 Virginia willow
- 70 Sudden shock
- 71 Did sums
- 72 Singer Vikki
- 73 Uses a straw

DOWN

- 1 Offend
- 2 Reason d' —
- 3 Erode
- 4 Little blue creature



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- 5 Novelist McCullers
- 6 Lined up
- 7 Gist
- 8 Alleviated
- 9 Turmoil
- 10 Rail-splitter's tool
- 11 Amusement park vehicles
- 12 "Gantry"
- 13 Course
- 21 Furious
- 22 Cupid
- 26 Expend thoughtlessly
- 27 Throw out
- 28 Narrow fillet
- 29 Theme park
- 31 Gulf of Aden vessel
- 32 Two-masted vessels
- 35 Part of TNT
- 37 Cozy abode
- 39 To boot
- 40 Root vegetable
- 43 Unperturbable
- 45 Part of A.D.
- 48 Crawled
- 50 Kind of algebra
- 52 Glover film
- 53 Was sick
- 54 Work —
- 56 Metrical feet
- 59 So long
- 60 Finished
- 61 — me
- 62 Tangere
- 62 Fall
- 63 Evergreens
- 65 Four-in-hand

JORDAN TIMES
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Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye.

Palestinian, Jordanian industrialists discuss expanding cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation representing the Palestine Trade Promotion Institution, led by its Director Saeed Haifa, held talks Monday with Jordanian industrialists at the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI) on cooperation in industrial matters.

ACI Vice-President Wasef Azar said that talks focused on bilateral cooperation and economic integration as Jordan, Palestine, Egypt and Israel have considered establishing a joint regional business council in the near future.

Mr. Azar added that they discussed obstacles obstructing the flow and exchange of goods between the two countries. He said: "We discussed with the Palestinians the Israeli obstacles on the Jordan River bridges and other hindrances which to date have hampered the flow of goods between Jordan and Palestine."

Dr. Haifa said that the Palestinian industrial sector was severely harmed under the Israeli occupation and noted that Israel aimed at transforming the Palestinian market into a consuming rather than a productive one.

He added that although there are 4,255 foundations in Palestine producing foodstuffs, clothes, textiles, leather, plastics, and metal goods, most of them were not large industries.

He noted that industrial revenues do not exceed nine per cent of the Palestinian gross domestic product (GDP), adding that most of these industries operate at less than fifty per cent of their production capacity.

He repeated that the Palestinian National Authority was for adopting a free economy policy to encourage the private sector to set its own industries.

Dr. Haifa said that Palestinian industrialists found it possible to use Jordanian raw materials in their industries to save 40 per cent of the total cost of their industries. The Palestinian delegation had met with Trade and Industry Minister Ali Abul Ragheb Saturday and toured the Sahab industrial city.

Suez Canal sweetens deals to lure traffic in 1997

ISMAILIYA, Egypt (R) — The Suez Canal Authority (SCA) announced Sunday a package of bargains it hopes will lure traffic away from alternative routes and back to the strategic waterway that links the Red Sea and Mediterranean.

Speaking to reporters at SCA headquarters in Ismailiya, Chairman Ahmad Fadel also said that transit dues for all types of ships travelling through the Suez Canal would remain unchanged for 1997, adding that the measures were aimed at providing a thrifty option to going round the Cape.

"Rates have been the same from 1994 to 1996 and for 1997 there will be no change considering the economics of operating and to

encourage them (ships) to use the canal instead of making the trip round Good Hope," Mr. Fadel said.

Facing stiff competition from the Cape of Good Hope route and the Sumed pipeline, which pumps oil between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, Suez Canal revenues have been on the slide.

The SCA's statistics department said Friday revenues for the first 10 months of 1996 fell to \$1.481 billion from \$1.606 billion in the same period last year.

Mr. Fadel told a news conference that the SCA's aim was to boost income — a main source of foreign currency for Egypt — and that he hoped the new tolls, bargain deals and a more personal approach would help.

"We have tried to increase the income of the Suez Canal. We also take care to be in direct contact with ship owners for them to come through. We met with a big number of representatives and shippers — direct contact is very important," Mr. Fadel said.

He dismissed Sumed as competition, saying that although the pipeline was pumping about 117 million tonnes of crude a year, it was servicing different customers.

"Ships discharging at Sumed cannot pass through the canal. All ships that go to Ain Al-Sukhna (the Red Sea terminal) are over the capacity of the Suez but the ships which call at Sidi Kirir (Mediterranean terminal) can pass.

"If we say that they (Sumed) have taken business out of Suez Canal, I don't think this is true. Actually we are trying to achieve a mutual benefit to all involved," he said.

Mr. Fadel said the SCA was also holding talks with Jordan to increase traffic between the canal and the Red Sea port of Aqaba. The SCA also listed the following special offers to crude tankers, liquefied natural gas tankers and container ships: Crude tankers

— Clients that take between one and two million tonnes of crude through the canal during 1997 will be eligible for a five per cent discount, both loaded and in ballast.

— Clients that take between two and three mil-

lion tonnes of crude through the canal during 1997 will be eligible for a 10 per cent discount.

— Clients that take through more than three million tonnes of crude in 1997 get a 30 per cent discount.

— The maximum toll for a round trip by any tanker, loaded or in ballast, is 330,000 Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) (about \$475,000), regardless of the tanker's net tonnage.

— The SCA also said it was willing to negotiate special deals for firms that want to transport any quantity of crude from the Gulf through the canal in 1997.

— Loaded northbound tankers are eligible for a 35 per cent discount regardless

of destination and the same discount is to be granted to the ship upon its ballast southbound trip.

— Loaded southbound tankers are eligible for a 25 per cent discount under the same terms.

Container ships — The SCA cut rates for ships with net tonnages over 70,000 to 1.38 SDRs per tonne from 2.42 SDRs a tonne when loaded. It also cut ballast rates to 1.56 SDRs a tonne from 2.06 SDRs.

— Containers are also to be exempt from extra dues if the top tier contains no more than 10 containers and if the top tier does not produce more than four feet.

EU agrees to let Italian lira rejoin ERM

BRUSSELS (R) — European Union (EU) finance ministers agreed Sunday to bring the Italian lira back into the EU's exchange rate mechanism (ERM), but only after making it clear they would have no truck with a weak currency.

The lira rejoins the currency grid at a central rate of 990 lira to the German mark, far stronger than the 1,000 to 1,050 lira rate initially sought by Rome.

EU policymakers said the stronger reentry rate was a reflection of the efforts the Italian government had made towards improving the economy's fundamentals.

But they cautioned that the lira's return to the ERM did not in any way prejudice Italy's chances of joining a common European currency, expected in 1999.

"It does not prejudice the decision in '98," said Dutch Central Bank President Wim Duisenberg, referring to the EU decision in early 1998 on which countries qualify for a single currency.

The lira's entry came at the end of an eight-hour special session of EU finance ministers and central bank governors convened after an abortive attempt to reach a deal by lower-level officials on Saturday.

Juergen Stark, state secretary at the German finance ministry, said the lengthy negotiations were made more difficult by Rome's many public comments in advance of the talks.

Italy had sought to rejoin the ERM as part of its campaign to be among the first wave of EU countries to join a single currency in 1999.

Responding to the decision, Italian Treasury Minister Carlo Ciampi said the agreed rate was satisfactory and not far from the government's earlier target.

A stable two-year stint within the ERM — designed to provide exchange rate stability — is one of the qualifying criteria for the new currency, the euro.

The prospect of a raft of countries such as Italy, Spain and Portugal with their relatively weak economies qualifying for the single currency has sent shivers through Germany's powerful Bundesbank.

Officials said that 14 of the EU's 15 countries had refused to countenance any rate from Italy that was weaker than 1,000 lira to the mark.

Sources said Germany had even argued for a rate as strong as 970 liras to the mark.

In a statement issued after the meeting, the EU praised Italy for the "substantial adjustments" it had already achieved in improving its economy.

"The Italian authorities are committed to intensify their efforts to complete the adjustment of their economy," it said.

With the lira in the ERM, only three of the EU's 15 countries — Britain, Sweden and Greece — are now outside the grid.

Swedish Finance Minister Erik Asbrink said the Italian move would have no effect on his country, which does not believe that ERM membership is essential to qualify for the single currency.

"Our attitude has not changed," Mr. Asbrink told reporters.

In Italy, Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi said the reentry to the ERM was a fundamental step to joining the single currency.

But opposition leader Silvio Berlusconi criticised the rate of entry as not being favourable.

High prices discourage people from buying land for trading purposes

REVENUES COLLECTED by the Land and Survey Department during the last month of October amounted to JD6.1 million which is a figure 24 per cent less than the amount collected during October 1995 and 15 per cent less than the revenues during the previous month of Sept. 1995.

Badri Al Mulqi, the former director of the Land and Survey Department, attributed the high fees that must be paid to the treasury for the recession. He explained that high land prices in general have become a clear phenomenon and, as such, this has resulted in higher fees. Mr. Mulqi said the unjustified rise in land prices has affected the real estate sector and, consequently, the number of deals reaching the department has dropped. "There are certain locations where prices have peaked and cannot rise any further," he noted.

The former director said: "In the past, there were wider and more open investment in this sector but the political situation also directly influenced the volume of investments." He added: "I hope that matters will improve, as expected, after the Cairo conference as undoubtedly any political breakthrough would be followed by an economic breakthrough. This will surely reflect on the volume of trade in all areas of the real estate sector."

Real estate dealer Darwish Imheyrat said that as a result of high land prices people were seeking small plots of lands, not exceeding 400 square metres, in eastern Amman. Others, preferring western Amman, were after buying apartments of different sizes due to the high prices of land, Mr. Imheyrat pointed out. He said: "Today, people are seeking to buy land for building a home and not for trading purposes as the case has been in the past."

He agreed with Mr. Mulqi that the political situation and its effect on the economy in general and on the real estate sector in particular cannot be ignored as "many buyers who wanted to purchase real estate have postponed their moves as a result." Mr. Imheyrat viewed the fees on land deals as normal and suitable.

According to a table showing revenues collected in October 96 and October 1995, the lowest amount was in western Amman which generated JD555,000 in revenues compared to JD1,157,000 in October 1995 — a 52 per cent drop. In "Amman" the drop was 43.5 per cent from JD1,668,000 to JD 940,742 in October 1996 while in southern Amman the drop was 36.6 per cent from JD1,273,000 to JD807,000. Revenues from deals in northern Amman were higher last month as they amounted to JD1,309,000 from JD1,225,000 in October 1995 (Al Ra'i).

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JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

Look—there's a hint on the pumpkin!

THE KIND OF WEATHER YOU GET ON HALLOWEEN.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SUEDE SOAPY MAGNET BLAZER
Answer: What the fisherman suffered when their catch diminished — A NET LOSS

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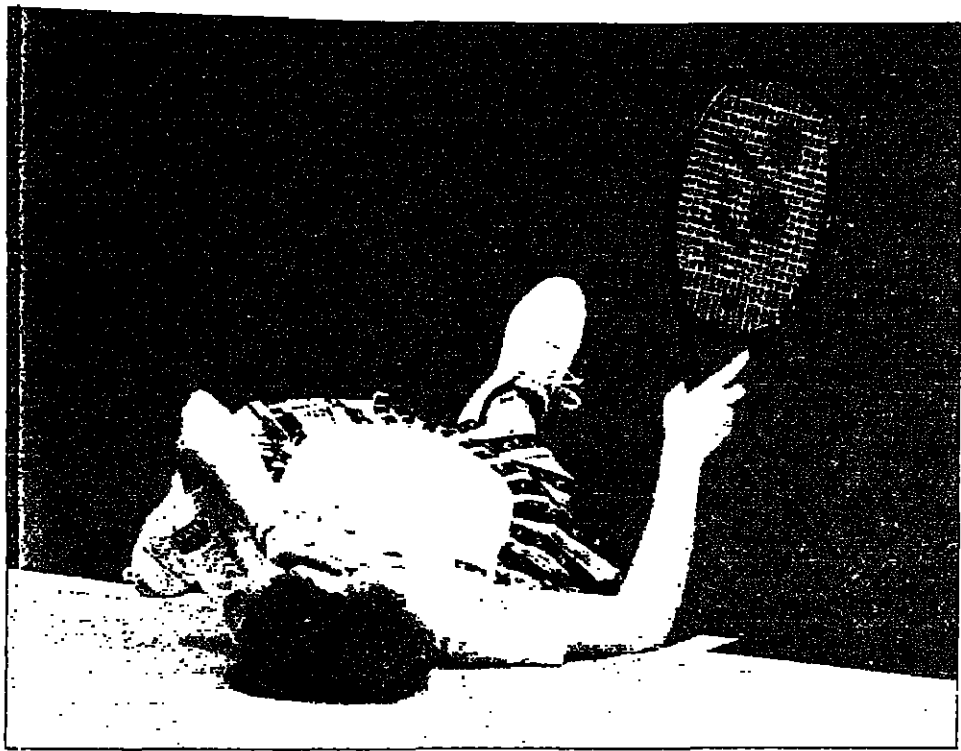
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Switzerland's Martina Hingis lies on the court after she twisted her ankle during play against Germany's Steffi Graf in the finals of the Chase Championships November 24 at Madison Square Garden. At the time Hingis was ahead 5-3 in the fourth set and after an injury delay won the set, but Graf won the final set 6-0 to win the championship (Reuters photo)

Graf turns back Hingis in five-set Chase final

NEW YORK (R) — World No. 1 Steffi Graf finished the year by turning back a spirited challenge from Swiss teenager Martina Hingis 6-3, 4-6, 6-0, 4-6, 6-0 Sunday to retain her title at the \$2 million Chase Championships.

Graf battled for nearly three hours at Madison Square Garden in her second consecutive five-set final at the season-ending event to turn back the 16-year-old challenger and win the tournament for a fifth time.

Hingis was bidding to become only the second player in the tournament's history to win in her first appearance. Australian Evonne Goolagong did it in 1974.

Graf, 27, finished the year atop the world rankings for a fourth year in a row. She won all three Grand Slams she played: the French Open,

Wimbledon and the U.S. Open. Her \$500,000 prize money here raised her earnings this season to more than \$2.5 million.

Graf has now won the championships in 1987, 1989, 1993 and 1995, when she beat fellow German Anke Huber in five sets.

The seventh-seeded Hingis played with poise and grit, especially in the final game of the fourth set to force the match into a decisive fifth set.

Despite cramping in her left thigh which forced her to leave the court for a three-minute injury timeout on the previous changeover, Hingis kept running and hitting winners. She finally broke serve in a marathon 18-point 10th game to take the fourth set when Graf netted a backhand.

Hingis had started cramping badly in the left thigh after serving a double fault for 15-15 at 5-3 as Graf was cutting into a 5-1 lead.

Hingis flexed her leg and then dropped flat on her back on the court to stretch her aching muscles. She got a delay of game warning from the chair umpire Jane Harvey, and then lost the next three points in a row.

In the final set, Graf showed no mercy to her tenacious foe, mixing in drop shots along with her usual barrage of ground-stroke winners and powerful serves to wrap up the victory in a rapid 23-minute set.

Hingis managed to win just eight points in the final four games.

Graf also played in some distress, icing her chronically sore left knee midway through the fourth set.

Hingis collected \$250,000.

Sonics beat Knicks for 11th straight win

NEW YORK (R) — The Seattle SuperSonics, last year's Western Conference winners, are on a roll again.

Shawn Kemp scored 22 points and the SuperSonics shut down the New York Knicks for much of the second half Sunday in a 102-92 victory, their 11th straight.

Detlef Schrempf scored 17 points, Gary Payton added 16 and Hersey Hawkins had nine of his 15 in the pivotal third quarter for the SuperSonics, who have won eight straight road games.

"We're on a good roll right now," said Seattle's Sam Perkins, who had 15 points. "We're playing good defense and that doesn't matter where you play."

Seattle has the longest current winning streak in the NBA. It needs three more wins to match last season's team-record 14-game winning streak.

"I think they are truly a good team," Knicks coach Jeff Van Gundy said. "They believe in themselves. We haven't earned that belief. It's just like confidence. You aren't given that. You earn it."

"I don't think they're any better a team than we are," said center Patrick Ewing, whose team has lost three in a row and dropped to 3-3 at home. "We just fell apart."

Guards Chris Childs, Allan Houston and John

Starks scored 13 points apiece for the Knicks. Ewing was held to a season-low eight points on 2-of-15 shooting.

At Los Angeles, Charles Barkley had 23 points and 15 rebounds and sank a key three-pointer with 53 seconds left as the Houston Rockets avenged their only loss of the season with a 90-85 victory over the Lakers, their sixth straight win.

Clyde Drexler scored 10 of his 17 points in the fourth quarter and Kevin Willis added 17 for the Rockets, who overcame the absence of Hakeem Olajuwon and improved to a league-best 6-0 on the road. Olajuwon is sidelined with an irregular heartbeat.

Drexler became the 24th player in NBA history to score 20,000 points. He is the second player this season to surpass the milestone, joining Ewing.

Shaquille O'Neal had 23 points and 12 rebounds and Nick Van Exel added 21 points and 12 assists for the Lakers, who won at Houston in double overtime 12 days earlier. O'Neal was 3-of-11 from the line, including two critical misses with 25 seconds to go.

In Phoenix, the Suns remained winless, losing their 12th straight as former Sun Dan Majerle made a clutch three-pointer with seven seconds to go in an 87-84 Miami Heat victory.

The slide matches the worst in franchise history for the Suns, despite the return of point guard Kevin Johnson. Johnson had 15 points and nine assists in his first game of the season after surgery to remove an abdominal hernia.

The Suns also lost 12 straight in 1977. Phoenix is five losses away from Miami's NBA record of 17 losses to start a season, set in the Heat's inaugural 1988-89 campaign.

In Boston, Dana Barros scored 21 points and Dino Radja added 19 and 11 rebounds as the Celtics cruised past the Dallas Mavericks 105-91, ending a four-game losing streak.

At Cleveland, Tyrone Hill scored seven of his 17 points in an 18-5 run that opened the second half and gave the Cavaliers their third straight win, 103-74 over the Sacramento Kings.

In Vancouver, Shareef Abdur-Rahim had 18 points, nine rebounds and nine assists and made two key free throws as the Grizzlies defeated the San Antonio Spurs 96-91 in a matchup of the worst teams in the Midwest Division. Vancouver snapped a four-game losing streak. Dominique Wilkins scored 26 points for the injury-crippled Spurs, who lost their fifth straight. San Antonio had won its four previous meetings with Vancouver.

Vicenza steal Inter's thunder as Milanese duel ends all-square

PARIS (AFP) — Vicenza went top of the Serie A for the first time in their 94-year history Sunday after beating lowly Reggiana 2-0 as the Milan Derby ended in a 1-1 stalemate, preventing Inter from taking top slot.

Daniele Ambrosini was Vicenza's hero, scoring a goal in each half to leave them a point clear of newly-promoted Bologna, who trounced 10-man Atalanta 3-1.

Spain and Germany also saw the league leadership change hands in a weekend of frenzied European action as Real Madrid leapfrogged Barcelona in Spain and Bayern Munich ousted Stuttgart in the German Bundesliga.

But it was Italy's eagerly-awaited clash of the giants which took top billing, with Roy Hodgson's Inter looking to put one over their city rivals in their shared San Siro Stadium.

A win would have taken Inter back to the summit, but they were up against it once Roberto Baggio scored for Milan after just four minutes following a Marcel Desailly through pass.

Frenchman Youri Djorkaeff levelled from the penalty spot eight minutes later after Paolo Maldini floored Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano in a stirring, full-blooded contest.

Milan were left to rue three glaring missed opportunities, as Baggio and Zvonimir Boban both spurned chances with only Inter goalkeeper Gianluca Pagliuca to beat.

Inter now stand third on goal difference behind Bologna.

In Spain, Croatian hotshot Davor Suker grabbed a hat-trick to send Real Madrid top of the tree Sunday with a 4-2 win over Valencia in the Bernabeu.

Real took full advantage of Barcelona's 2-1 lapse against Athletic Bilbao, who handed Bobby Robson's Bayern thus leapfrogged

Stuttgart and also Bayer Leverkusen, who slumped 3-1 at Sankt Pauli, a result which took the Hamburg-based side out of the relegation zone.

Reigning champions Borussia Dortmund went third on goal difference from Leverkusen with a crushing 4-0 win at Werder Bremen, who suffered their first home loss of the season.

French title favourites Paris Saint Germain saw their lead cut to a single point after they dropped two

home points to Olympique Marseille in a goalless draw at the Parc Des Princes.

Monaco are breathing down their necks after a 2-0 win over struggling Nancy. Scotland international John Collins and Victor Ikpeba were both on target.

Bastia hoisted themselves into third place with a surprise 2-1 win at champions Auxerre. Auxerre's second consecutive home reverse means Guy Roux's side is rapidly fading from the title scene. They now stand eighth.

Stuttgart and also Bayer Leverkusen, who slumped 3-1 at Sankt Pauli, a result which took the Hamburg-based side out of the relegation zone.

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French title favourites Paris Saint Germain saw their lead cut to a single point after they dropped two

INVITATION TO AN INTERNATIONAL TENDER

1. Mu'tah University invite specialized and experienced international companies to submit their bids to the tender for the integrated project "A Modern Computer Center at Mu'tah University" involving the supply, erection, start-up, technical assistance, maintenance and training to handle the equipment.

2. Bidders should submit a financial offer to the best terms and conditions available in their countries. This financial offer should be a loan for fully financing the integrated project and available at present to the Government of Jordan including the detailed financing conditions, such as:
- Low interest rate - grace period
- semi, annual reimbursement.

3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and collect the Bidding Documents at the Liaison Office of Mu'tah University located on Samir Rifai St. -Jabal Amman between 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Saturday through Thursday beginning November 26, 1996 to December 14, 1996.

4. Bidders may offer more updated version of the specific component and equipment called for.

5. Prices are to be quoted on the basis CIF Mu'tah University excluding custom duties and other official taxes And charges, but including 12 month on site warranty and installation.

6. Specifications should be according to specifications stated in the project document which will be handed to the bidders.

7. The offer will be evaluated technically and financially according to our specification and requirement. Contract will be awarded to the best evaluated bidders who would prove capable to carry out the requirements of the contract to be signed.

8. A complete set of the Bidding Document may be obtained from above reference office upon submission of a written application and a payment of a non-refundable fee. All payments will be made by a bank draft or certified bank check in the currency of the purchaser's choice or in cash made out in favour of Mu'tah University. The price of purchasing the documents would be the equivalent in Jordanian Dinars or US\$ currency of the following amounts:

- * For delivery to personal callers \$ 400.000 per bid document.
- * For delivery by local mail to local Bidders by courier Service \$ 450.000 per bid document.
- * For delivery to Overseas Bidders by courier Service \$ 550.000 for bid document.

Closing date for the bid submission will be noon at 11 o'clock, on Jan 14 1996. Bids shall have a validity of 90 days.

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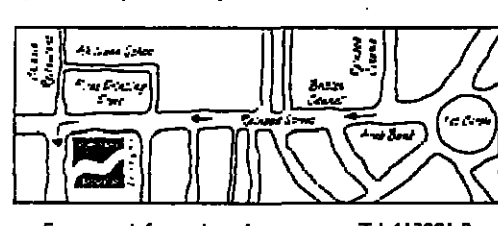
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Mu'tah University invites specialized companies to submit bids for the following two tenders:

- Tender No. L21/96: Supplying the University Library with foreign books and publications.
- Tender No. L42/96: Supplying the University Library with foreign periodicals.

Interested eligible bidders inside and outside Jordan can obtain the bidding documents at Mu'tah University Liaison Office on Samir Rifai street - Jabal Amman, between the 3rd and the 4th Circles. Telephone 645295.

Bidders are requested to submit the following:
- A bid bond of JD 3000 for every tender.
The price of each copy of the two tenders is J.D 25 (unrefundable).

- An original copy of the offer with two certified copies signed by the bidder.
- All copies should be enclosed in an envelope where it is written the name of the bidder and the number of the tender. This envelop should be placed in the Central Tender Committee box at the University in AL- Karak.

Closing date for the delivery of offers is Monday, four o'clock, December 23, 1996.

All offers that do not fulfill the conditions and requirements of the tender will not be considered.

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Sampras silences Becker fans in 5-set thriller

HANOVER (R) — Pete Sampras defied an inspired Boris Becker and 15,000 of his fanatical German fans to clinch the ATP World Championship for the third time after a dramatic five-set final on Sunday.

Faced with a partisan crowd which roared every shot played by defending champion Becker, the American World No. 1 showed immense composure to win 3-6, 7-6, 7-6, 6-7, 6-4 in four hours.

The Hanover inspired Becker to save two match points in a dramatic fourth-set tiebreak which he won 13-11.

But Sampras, who also won the tournament in 1991 and 1994, refused to be flustered and gradually carved out a courageous victory. His courage was worth \$1.34 million to his bank balance.

"What a match five sets against Boris on his home soil," Sampras said. "It was not easy. The crowd was right behind him. But they were fair. It was great fun."

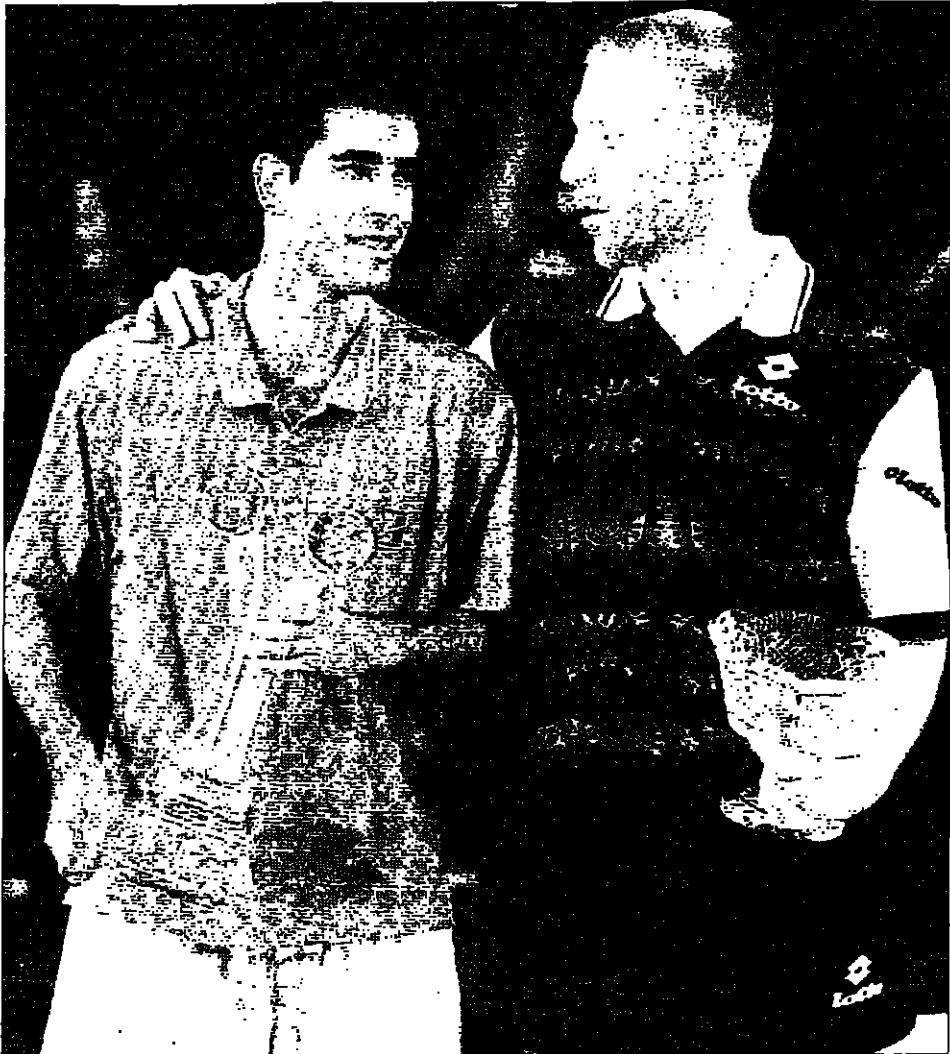
Said Becker: "That was the best match of my life. I am very proud of it."

The crowd was swept up into a frenzy by cheer leaders before the match and the arena was covered in banners supporting Becker.

The atmosphere clearly gave Becker an edge early on and he began the match in astonishing style, firing in four aces to take the first game to love. It was not long before he broke Sampras's serve.

In the fourth game the three-times Wimbledon champion showed brilliant reactions to hit a backhand return down the line and set up his first break point. He then took the game to lead 3-1 when Sampras hit a forehand out of court.

Virtually every shot Becker hit from the front and the back of the court was perfect in the first set. Another crisp backhand clinched the set in 27 minutes and the crowd rose to their feet to



German Boris Becker (R) puts his hand on the shoulder of Pete Sampras of the USA as they pose with trophies after the ATP World Championship's final match in Hanover (Reuters photo)

celebrate it.

Sampras had his first chance to bounce back in the sixth game of the second set when he had two break points but Becker saved them with some booming serves.

But when the set went to a tiebreak the American lifted his game, clinching the decider 7-5 with a volley at the net.

Sampras, who rarely shows his emotions on court, was clearly fired up and clenched his fist and roared his approval at the end of the set.

When Becker lost his nerve in the third-set tiebreak the American struck again. Becker dou-

ble-faulted to give Sampras a 5-4 lead and the world number one pounced with an ace and a backhand passing shot to take the tiebreak 7-4.

With both players serving well, the fourth set was equally tight. The tiebreak was one of the most dramatic for years.

Becker saved two match points against him before taking advantage of his fifth set point when Sampras hit a volley out of the back of the court to clinch it 13-11.

But Sampras, at 25 four years younger than his rival, bounced back again in the fifth. After a long rally in the ninth game when both players were at the back of

the court, Sampras hit a backhand down the line to break Becker's serve and lead 5-4.

Becker saved another match point in the next game when Sampras was serving. But the American finally triumphed when Becker hit a backhand into the net after another long rally.

Sampras became the fifth player to win the championship, formerly known as the Masters, three or more times.

Becker and John McEnroe have also won the title three times. Ilie Nastase triumphed four times and Ivan Lendl won five championships.

IOC impressed by public support for Rio bid

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — International Olympic committee officials said on Sunday they were impressed with public enthusiasm for Rio De Janeiro's bid to attempt the 2004 Olympics.

But the group, who completed their three-day inspection of the city on Sunday, also appeared concerned about the pollution of Guanabara Bay, the picture postcard bay on which part of the city is built.

"The committee appreciated the enormous support given to the candidature by the Cariocas (natives of Rio) and the people of Brazil and the different levels of government," said Thomas Bach, president of the IOC's evaluation committee.

Bach was evidently impressed after the Rio 2004 committee laid on a host of sporting events on Copacabana Beach in front of the hotel where the IOC officials were staying.

These included an event in which tribe of Brazilian Indians in traditional dress took part in a log-carrying race and a tournament of foot-volleyball, a sport frequently seen on local beaches.

Two other positive points were the participation allowed to non-governmental groups by the Rio 2004 committee and the fact that the sporting venues were concentrated in five areas of the city, Bach said.

The Olympic stadium and village would be built on the campus of the Federal University, which is on an island partly bordered by one of the city's most polluted rivers.



Al Wihdat

Wihdat win Jordan Cup

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Wihdat Monday beat Al Ramtha 3-1 on penalties to clinch their fourth Jordan Cup title and the first of the 1996 soccer titles.

The top two teams resorted to penalties after the match ended in a goalless draw. The pressure came down on both goalkeepers to decide the winner.

Al Wihdat's Naser Ghandour saved two shots by Al Ramtha's Murad Horani and Isa Azizeh while Leith Dardour's was far from the post. Al Ramtha's sole goal came by Kahled Agouri.

On the other hand, Al Wihdat scored by Jamal Mahmoud, Kahled Majdalawi and Faisal Ibrahim as only Sufyan Abdullah missed his shot.

The match was attended by a large crowd of over 15,000 fans who filled the stands at Amman International Stadium.

Al Ramtha had last won the Cup in 1990 and 91 while Al Wihdat were the winners in 82, 85, and 88.

With the conclusion of the Jordan Cup only the Premier League crown remains up for grabs. Al Faisali had won the season-opener Cup winners' Cup while Al Ramtha took the Federation Shield.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan meets members of the Kingdom's military taekwondo team who returned recently from the 8th World Championship which was held in Croatia. Mohammad Falah won a silver medal for Jordan in the championship (photo by Boghos)

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U.S., Jordan 'quite close' to signing bilateral investment treaty — Egan

Ambassador says Washington committed to supporting Kingdom's economic moves and overall development

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The U.S. and Jordan have nearly completed the drafting of a bilateral investment treaty after separating parallel discussions on protection for intellectual property rights from the negotiations on the agreement, the U.S. ambassador in Amman said Monday.

Ambassador Wesley Egan also reiterated that Washington was committed to supporting Jordan's economic development and fully backed the Kingdom's entry to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The ambassador, in an address to a gathering organised by the Amman Petra Rotary Club and in comments thereafter, listed a series of measures adopted by Washington to help the Kingdom's economy an overall development in the past year.

These included the granting of: — \$200 million in export credit guarantees and insurance through the Eximbank. The agreement was signed three months ago.

— \$40 million in commodity credits.

— \$21 million in soft loan financing for grain purchases.

— \$1.25 million to conduct studies on expanding and upgrading communication facilities and management.

An "Open Skies" agreement under which Jordanian air carriers are allowed to fly in and out of the United States without any restrictions on frequency or destination.

Mr. Egan noted that Jordan was the only country to receive such U.S. treatment other than European countries.

The last American gesture towards Jordan was granting the Kingdom the status of a non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) ally that gives "priority consideration" for its requests for advanced military technology and equipment.

Ambassador Egan told the gathering that Jordan and the U.S. had made "significant progress in our negotiation of a bilateral investment agreement, which, in our view, will provide U.S. and Jordanian investors operating in each other's territories six basic protections."

The provisions of the proposed agreement include limits on expropriation of investments and prompt and adequate compensation for investors, the right to transfer and investment-related funds into and outside the country, limits on the host government's rights to impose performance requirements on investments, binding international arbitration, and the right of the investor to engage senior personnel of the investor's own choice regardless of nationality.

"We are quite close to signing the agreement," Ambassador Egan told the Jordan Times after the speech. "We could (sign it) in a few months" perhaps even before the end of the year, he added.

Mr. Egan said negotiations on the accord were speeded up after parallel but linked talks on protection for intellectual property rights (IPRs) were separated.

He said the U.S. opted for the separation because protection for IPRs warranted legislation and involved a lengthy process through the government and Parliament. This would have held up the bilateral investment agree-

ment itself, which the U.S. sees as a key vehicle to bring in American private sector investment into Jordan.

American banks and government funding agencies consider the existence of such a bilateral agreement as a highly favourable point while considering financing for U.S. firms investing in a foreign country.

Ambassador Egan also rejected that there was a "blockade" against Iraq. He noted that Jordanian trade with Iraq was continuing — \$200 million under the official protocol and several hundred million dollars outside the protocol — and that the Kingdom was the only country allowed to import Iraqi crude.

Mr. Egan reiterated the American position that the U.N. sanctions against Iraq would be lifted as and when Baghdad fully complies with the decisions and demands of the U.N. Security Council.

Replying to a question on "difficult demands" placed as preconditions for Jordan's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Ambassador Egan said Washington was the main force behind ensuring negotiations between Jordan and the WTO as scheduled in late October because it felt that it was "critically important" that the talks began as planned.

Mr. Egan conceded that there were several aspects of the Jordanian trade system and tariffs that were "not satisfactory" to the U.S. but expressed hope that these could be addressed and resolved through negotiations.

"We fully support Jordan's accession to the WTO," said the ambassador. "There is no doubt about it. We believe that it is good for Jordan, it is good for the region, it is good for everyone."

Taleban claim gains in major offensive

KALAKAN (AFP) — The Taleban militia have broken a deadlock on the frontlines around Kabul and pushed at least 15 kilometres northwards in a major offensive, witnesses said Monday.

Sporadic fighting was continuing in Kalakan, a village 38 kilometres from Kabul up the Old Road, one of the two northbound highways out of the capital, the Taleban said.

Parts of the village were still held by troops of an anti-Taleban coalition, they added.

"Kalakan Bazaar is a no-man's land, but the enemy are still in a school of the village," a frontline Taleban fighter told AFP.

The Taleban launched their successful infantry offensive Saturday night and Sunday morning against the frontline positions of the alliance of ex-Kabul government troops and ethnic Uzbek fighters of northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum near Hussein Kot.

The offensive breaks nearly one month of military stagnation on the Old Road when an advance by the former government forces

towards Kabul bogged down some 20 kilometres short of the capital.

Although information on total casualties was not available, both sides were believed to have suffered serious losses.

One body was seen on the back of a jeep and the Red Cross reported carrying 21 war-wounded, not necessarily all Taleban, back to Kabul Sunday.

Haji Abdul Malik, the Taleban commander, who spoke near Kalakan, swept his hand in an arc to illustrate the broad swathe of territory which had just fallen to his men.

On the Old Road, Taleban gains included the first-aid clinic run by the International Committee of the Red Cross at Mir Bacha Kot, the now deserted district centre of Serai Khoja, and at the foothills of the mountains to the west, Guldara district centre.

Mr. Malik said the immediate programme was to get his men "sorted-out" in strong defensive positions around Kalakan, and then to push on against their rivals.

Libya will have medium-range missiles by 2006 — El Mundo

MADRID (AFP) — Libya will have nuclear, chemical or bacteriological ballistic missiles with a range of up to 3,000 kilometres by 2006 at the latest, the Spanish paper El Mundo reported Monday citing a secret North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) document.

The potential threat to NATO allies close to Libya, particularly southern alliance countries like Spain, will "increase in a significant way in the next 10 years," the newspaper quoted the document, which analyses possible threats to NATO over the next decade, as saying.

Libya is listed as a state sponsor of terrorism and has been the subject of an international air and arms embargo since 1992.

"Libya continues to strive for self-sufficiency in the construction of chemical weapons, and it is continuing the construction of an underground complex for the production of chemical substances near Turhounah,

50 kilometres south of Tripoli, which could be operational by the year 2000," the document said.

However, the text added that the regime of Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qadhafi "faces growing internal problems, particularly the rise of fundamentalist extremism, economic stagnation and social discontent."

"The regions of the Middle East and North Africa are the most threatening, because certain countries, in particular Libya, Syria, Iraq and Iran, possess or are trying to develop weapons of mass destruction capable of striking countries situated on the southern flank of NATO," the document said.

"Certain countries in the Middle East, north Africa and Southeast Asia are showing a growing interest in developing weapons of mass destruction because they consider that these sorts of weapons enhance their prestige," it said.

Bashir decries possible new sanctions on Sudan

CAIRO (Agencies) — Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir has expressed concern that his country could be punished unjustly by the United Nations "for a crime it did not commit."

In an interview published Monday in the London-based Al Wasat magazine, Lieutenant General Bashir also decried reports that the United States plans to send funds to neighbouring countries to undermine his regime.

The U.N. Security Council is considering air sanctions against Sudan to try to force the country to surrender suspects wanted for the June 1995 assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Mr. Mubarak was unhurt in the incident in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The council earlier this year urged U.N. member nations to reduce Sudan's diplomatic presence and limit diplomats' travel. Last week, the United States — which has been pushing for a U.N. ban on international flights to and from Sudan — announced it would deny entry to Sudanese government and military officials.

Asked if he expected more punitive actions against Sudan, Gen. Bashir told Al Wasat: "Under the current international situation, we expect everything."

He added: "The whole issue is based on accusations that lack evidence. The truth is that (the sanctions) are an attempt to punish Sudan for a crime it did not commit."

Both Egypt and Ethiopia have accused Sudan of complicity in the attack on Mr. Mubarak. An Ethiopian court last September found three Egyptians guilty of the attack and sentenced them to death.

Gen. Bashir took power in a military coup in 1989 and installed an Islamic regime in Sudan. He won the presidency in voting earlier this year that was boycotted by the opposition.

Gen. Bashir also was asked about reports that the U.S. government is planning to send some \$20 million in military aid to Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda to help overthrow his regime.

According to the Washington Post, the funds

would go to countries that support Sudanese opposition groups. U.S. government officials have denied such plans.

Gen. Bashir described the alleged funding as "against all norms and laws."

"The truth is that we want to ask others how they evaluate the situation when a big power, a member of the Security Council... supports other countries with the aim of committing aggression on an independent country."

The Sudanese president also denied allegations that his country supports terrorism. He said it was untrue that Sudan maintained training camps for extremists, as the United States and Egypt have charged.

He acknowledged, however, that some controversial foreign residents of Sudan have left in recent months.

They include a number of fighters who had fought in Afghanistan against the Russians in the 1980s as well as the controversial businessman Osama Ben Laden.

Mr. Ben Laden, stripped of his Saudi citizenship in 1994, has been accused of being a leading financier of extremists.

"Osama Ben Laden entered the country as an investor and at that time he did not have any problems with the Saudi government," Gen. Bashir said. "When he felt that his presence in Sudan might cause some problems, he left."

The president added that Mr. Ben Laden had sold all his property in Sudan before leaving with his family.

Recent reports have said Mr. Ben Laden currently lives in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, a member of Sudan's parliament has called for closing down the U.S. embassy in Khartoum and chasing out its caretaker staff.

The suggestion was made by Musa Hussein Dhirur, who heads the parliament's accountability committee, the official Al Sudan Al Hadeith newspaper reported Monday.

The Sudanese legislator made the proposal to protest reports that the U.S. government is planning to send surplus military equipment to Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda to help overthrow the regime in Sudan.



CRASH SCENE: Rescuers carry a body recovered from the wreckage of the hijacked Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 767 on the beach at Moroni, Comoros Islands on Monday. One hundred and twenty three people died when the hijacked Ethiopian airliner crashed in to the sea near the Indian Ocean Island after running out of fuel on Saturday (see page 5) (Reuters photo)

Businessmen see plan for Israeli trade fair in Jordan as untimely

By Maria Bizri
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Despite hostility from the Jordanian business community, the Jordanian International and National Expo Corporation (JINEC) has said that it will continue preparations for an Israeli exhibition scheduled for next month.

JINEC, a local private sector organisation, is planning the trade exhibition to be held in Amman next month in the hope of "creating a climate which would help both Jordanian and Israeli businessmen work together towards common goals," said Fakhri Naser, general manager of JINEC.

"The Jordanian consumer, as well as the Jordanian industrialist, need to be acquainted with Israeli products," he said. Moreover, he stated, "such an event could, in fact, help reduce the obstacles which Israel is placing regarding commercial trade between the two countries."

The Jordanian Chambers of Commerce and the Jordan Businessmen's Association do not agree.

President of the Chamber of Commerce Nizar Darwazah said that as a representative of the private sector he does not believe the time was right for such an event.

"The commercial and trade sectors are not comfortable with the idea of holding an event to promote Israeli products in the Kingdom," he said.

Mr. Darwazah stressed that at a time when the Israeli government is failing to follow through with its previous commitments towards the Palestinians, hindering their economy and limiting Jordanian exports to Israel, the last thing that should be done would be to promote Israeli industries and products in Jordan.

Reuters quoted Mr. Naser as affirming that more than 250 Israeli businessmen

were expected to attend the fair and over 80 Israeli companies have already booked almost 2,000 square metres of display space at the Jordan Export Promotion Fair.

The fair, according to Mr. Naser, is supported by key Israeli governmental agencies despite heightened regional tension.

Mr. Naser also told Reuters that Arab Gulf businessmen were expected to attend the fair notwithstanding scepticism over premature deals with Israeli firms before the realisation of a comprehensive Middle East peace.

President of the Jordanian Businessmen's Association Hamdi Tab'a, in an interview with Al Dustour, questioned the logic behind holding the exhibition at a time when Israel was still impeding Jordanian exports to both Israel and the Palestinian self-rule areas.

"We need Jordanian/Palestinian fairs and not a Jordanian/Israeli one," Mr. Tab'a told Al Dustour. "We are opposed to this exhibition, we do not see the reasons why it should be held, nor do we welcome it nor any Israeli businessman in Jordan."

Munir Hamameh, professor of economics at Jordan University, in an interview with the Jordan Times, deemed current Israeli policies as not very encouraging.

"Although the Israelis say they want normalisation, they are actually working against it. The exhibition will only help Israeli industries without forcing Israel to reciprocate," he said.

"What we need today," Dr. Hamameh continued, "is to stop all normalisation until Israel abides by its commitments to the peace process it signed with both Jordan and the Palestinians."

The Jordanian business community believes that making deals with Israel today would only give it a privilege, they feel, it does not deserve.

U.S. blasts Serbs for voiding poll results

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States lambasted as "totally unacceptable" Monday a decision by Serbian electoral authorities to annul the results of municipal elections, many of which were won by the opposition.

"Such a step undermines the electoral process and invalidates Serbia's claim to be a state evolving towards democracy," State Department spokesman Glyn Davies said.

Serbian opposition parties won control of city governments in Belgrade and elsewhere during the Nov. 17 vote but local electoral commissions packed by members of President Slobodan Milosevic's ruling Socialist Party have moved to annul the result.

Protests erupted in Belgrade on Monday in which more than 50,000 opposition supporters accused Mr. Milosevic of electoral fraud.

The State Department said its representative in Belgrade had met twice this week with Mr. Milosevic to urge him to respect the vote outcome.

Mr. Davies said Serbia's failure to recognise the outcome of the elections vindicated Washington for its refusal to establish full diplomatic relations with Belgrade until it shows a commitment to democratic principles.

More than a third of young Israelis hate Arabs — poll

TEL AVIV (AFP) — More than a third of young Israeli Jews hate Arabs and nearly two-thirds reject the idea they deserve equal rights with Jews, according to a survey published Monday in the Israeli press.

In the poll, carried out at the request of the education ministry among 2,700 Jewish high school students, 37 per cent of those questioned said they hated all Arabs and about two-thirds said Arab Israelis "should not get equal rights" in Jews.

The survey was carried out in 1994 under the previous Labour government, but the education ministry now headed by the right-wing leader of the National Religious Party (NRP) only released the results to the Haaretz newspaper this week.

One of the survey's co-authors, statistician Yacov Ezrahi, told Israel Radio Monday that the survey should not be viewed as confirming widespread racism among young Israelis.

"The results show rather a lack of confidence because those who said they hated Arabs said they believed the Arabs hated them even more," he said.

Mr. Ezrahi said the question on equal rights for Israel's nearly one million Arab citizens was also slightly misleading since most respondents justified their answer by the fact that Arab Israelis are not sub-

ject to mandatory army service as are Israeli Jews.

In answer to another question, 40 per cent of the students polled said they would prefer a "strong government" not linked to political parties to run the country.

'Offending' T-shirts

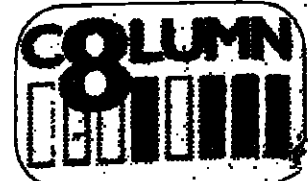
A graduating class of Israeli border policemen had T-shirts printed showing a Palestinian and an ultra-orthodox Jew lashed to a tree, the Maariv newspaper reported Monday.

Amid growing controversy in Israel over brutality by border police, the newspaper published a picture of one of the shirts which have been printed at the newly-trained border policemen's demand by a Tel Aviv store.

The shirts portrayed a Palestinian with his face hidden by a chequered headscarf and a bearded ultra-orthodox Jew wearing a skullcap tied to a large tree representing one of the border guard divisions.

"What can I tell you? I didn't like it but that's what they asked for," the owner of the store told a Maariv reporter when asked about the shirts.

General Yisrael Sadan, commander of the border police, told Maariv those involved in printing the "infantile" shirts would face disciplinary action, but added, "I fail to see it as an insult to the ultra-orthodox or to Arabs."



Smoker Demirel backs anti-smoking law

ANKARA (AP) — President Suleyman Demirel on Monday approved a law banning smoking in most public places in this country of millions of devout smokers. "Our president was of the opinion that to approve the law would be to the benefit of our country and its citizens," a news release from Mr. Demirel's office said.

The law, which also forbids the sale of cigarettes to minors, comes into effect as soon as it is published in the official gazette. Its publication is expected within days. The legislation was introduced by the governing Islamic Welfare Party and adopted by parliament earlier this month. It makes public transportation, sports centers and locations providing health, education and cultural services smoke-free zones. It also curbs cigarette advertising and makes health warnings on cigarette packs compulsory. Violators of the ban, including those who sell cigarettes to people under 18, face a fine amounting to \$105. Turks are avid smokers and frequently ignore no-smoking signs.

European court backs Britain over erotic film ban

STRASBOURG (R) — The European court of human rights on Monday upheld a British ban on an erotic film about the visions of a 16th-century Spanish nun, rejecting charges that it violated the director's freedom of expression. The judges ruled by seven to two that Britain's 1989 ban on the 18-minute, "Visions of Ecstasy," about the Roman Catholic mystic Saint Teresa of Avila did not breach the European Convention on Human Rights. The court agreed such censorship was justified under blasphemy laws to avoid shocking Christians. The film's director, Nigel Wingrove, argued that the ban violated his freedom of expres-

sion. The judges reached the decision after more than a year's deliberations, including viewing the film that includes sex scenes between the heroine and an actor representing Jesus Christ and a woman in a lesbian scene.

Chinese press hits out at 'vulgar' books

BEIJING (AFP) — Two Chinese newspapers Monday hit out at the number of "vulgar" books available in the country, singling out the works of Mo Yan. The Press and Publishing Journal said Mo Yan's work was "provocative and vulgar," while the Beijing legal daily complained of the number of books with shocking titles, like "Blood Trouble," "The Naked Man" and "The Prostitute," as well as Mo Yan's books. Mo Yan's latest work is called "Big Breasts, Big Buttocks" and has already won a literary prize in China. The author, who is best known internationally for his book "Red Sorghum," which was turned into a film, said the 700-page novel, which follows the life of a child who is saved at birth by Japanese soldiers, is a tribute to "maternity." The authorities have already launched a crackdown on trademarks and business names which have "vulgar" or "colonial" overtones as part of an overall campaign to restore a more "moral society."

Iranian minister to visit UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Iran's interior minister is to visit the United Arab Emirates next week for a national day celebration. UAE charges of Iranian hostility, the official agency WAM said Tuesday, would lead an Iranian delegation to the region.

Palestinian po
JERUSALEM (AP) — Palesti-
to cover Israelis moving
in this autonomous
a photographer's ca-
was destroyed when the
by Palestinians
reporters and a Pal-
Palestinian reporters an-
to cover the
day roadblock to cover the
assaulted when they refused
Joseph's
who lives near Joseph's
moved into the enclave
official Samih Kanawan sa-
agreed on bringing in the
cave would be negotia-
to oppose the Israeli mili-

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Kabarti returns
home from Spain

AMMAN (J.T.) — Presi-
dent Abdul Karim Kabarti
returned home on Tues-
day after a three-day visit to Spain.
He delivered a message
from His Majesty King Faisal
to King Juan Carlos I.
Kabarti also met with Prime Minister
Mansour Tarraf and other
government leaders on
the Middle East peace process
between Jordan and the Kingdom
of Spain and the European Union.

Decees approve
appointments

AMMAN (J.T.) — Royal
decrees have been issued
approving Cabinet decisions
appointing Hamad Al-
Fayez as director general
of the Cities and Villages
Department, Bank of
Jordan, and Al Asaf
as the Prime Minister's
advisor on the second
round of the Ministry of Justice
as a director general
of the Jordanian Judicial
Institute under decree endorsed
by the Cabinet.

Infat to visit
Qatar and UAE

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Jordanian
infat will visit Qatar and
the United Arab Emirates (UAE)
on Sunday to seek support
for the Palestinian stance
regarding the situation
with Israel.

The official said Tuesday
that the infat will visit the
UAE to meet its president, Sheik
Hamad bin Sultan Al Nahyan,
and head for Qatar for a
meeting with its leader, Sheikh
Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Na-
tional news agency AFP said
the infat would visit the UAE
on Sunday "for technical rea-

sons."

Jordanian held
in Israel

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Jordanian
was arrested by the Israeli
authorities at the beginning
of the month on suspicion of
being a member of a "terrorist
organization," Israeli judi-
cial sources were quoted as say-
ing by the French news agency
Agence France Presse.

The man, identified
as Haidi Haidi by the agency,
was a dispatch from Tel Aviv
arrived in Israel at the start
of the year to marry a woman
from Jaffa where there were
large Israeli-Arab communities.

The sources said Israel's in-
terior security agency Shin Bet
found that Haidi had "hor-
rible contacts with 'terror-
ists' and had provided infor-
mation to them."

He was quoted as say-
ing: "Tel Aviv district court
ordered him to be detained
for 15 days under house
arrest. During a hearing, au-
thorities asked for an ex-
tension of his detention. He
denied all the Shin Bet
charges. The sources said he
was on the case on Monday
when a Jordanian official
was immediately a-
rrested on the report."

Iranian minister
to visit UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Iran's interior minister
is to visit the United Arab Emirates
next week for a national day
celebration. UAE charges of
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agency WAM said Tuesday,
would lead an Iranian dele-
gation to the region.